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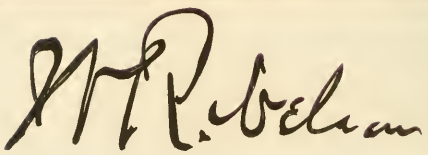
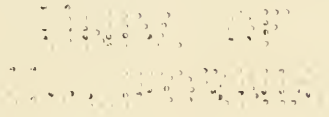


WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON

THE STORY OF A MAN A NEWSPAPER AND A CITY

BY MEMBERS OF THE STAFF OF
THE KANSAS CITY STAR



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1915

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ALL RIGETS FESEKVED

HE GAVE ALL TO KANSAS CITY

William R. Nelson, owner and editor of The Kansas City Star, in making arrangements for the final disposition of his estate, turns it over to Kansas City for an art gallery. The income from his property, carefully guarded, will go to the wife and daughter during their lifetime. After that it will pass into the hands of a board of trustees to be sold and the proceeds used for the purchase of art treasures for the enjoyment of the people of Kansas City.

We look upon this as a wise bequest. With Colonel Nelson art was not merely a rich man's fad. He was a lover of the beautiful. He appreciated its refining power. He knew that an appreciation of art is a matter of education. He loved Kansas City, the arena of his life struggles and his life triumphs, and in his desire to leave a perpetual monument, he has chosen wisely.

In his life he made service to the people a dominating passion. It was an honest desire to benefit the masses which caused him to provide for the future art enjoyment of the city which he loved — a munificent gift which will make the name of William R. Nelson a treasured memory for generations to come.

An editorial in the *Des Moines* (*Ia.*) *Capital.*

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WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY, BOYHOOD, AND EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS

William Rockhill Nelson was born March 7, 1841, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He came of a line of builders of cities and states. His American ancestry reached back almost three centuries. Two of his forefathers were named in the grant of lands for the founding of the city of Harlem, New York. Another was named in the deed from the Indians for the site of Brooklyn. Yet another founded the city of Poughkeepsie. One was the first judge chosen by popular vote in the New World. In the provincial assemblies of the colonial days, in the Indian wars during the century preceding the Revolutionary War, in the Revolution itself, men of his ancestral blood served with honor and distinction. They helped lay the foundations on which the colonies themselves were reared, and they were among the builders of the Nation formed by

the union of those colonies. To plan broadly and build nobly for the common good was his inheritance.

John Nelson, great-grandfather of William Rockhill Nelson, was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and received five hundred acres of land in Tompkins County, New York, for heroic services in the war. His son, Leonard Nelson, a farmer, married Mary De Groff, daughter of Moses De Groff, whose whole family were conspicuous for their patriotism in the Revolutionary period. Isaac De Groff Nelson, the son of Leonard and Mary Nelson, and the father of William Rockhill Nelson, was born in Poughkeepsie, New York. In 1836, when he was twenty-six years old, he and his three sisters emigrated to Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The following editorial, which appeared in the Times of South Bend, Indiana, after the death of Isaac De Groff Nelson in 1891, gives a glimpse of his sterling character: —

The father of William R. Nelson was one of those broad-gauged, noble-hearted, public-spirited men who gave prestige, stability, and fame to the Summit City and to Allen County. Governor James D. Williams ("Blue Jeans") appointed the senior

Nelson one of the commissioners to oversee the construction of the new statehouse in Indianapolis. Much surprise was expressed at the time that this building was erected within the limits of the appropriation, and with even a little balance left over. Such frugal management furnished cause for amazement, even in those days, and nearly every paper in the land commented upon this marvelous achievement of Mr. Nelson and his associates on the commission. It was a splendid vindication of the "honesty and simplicity policy" espoused and practiced by the "Blue Jeans" administration. The monument erected to Isaac De Groff Nelson in Lindenwood Cemetery in Fort Wayne testifies to the regard in which he was held by that community.

The mother of William R. Nelson, Elizabeth Rockhill, was of Quaker stock. Her father, William Rockhill, a native of New Jersey, removed to Indiana in 1819, bringing with him his father and mother, an invalid wife, and three daughters. He was one of the enterprising pioneers of the West and was closely associated with the development of the new State of Indiana, serving in Congress as one of its first representatives. He was an extensive farmer. Mr. Nelson often expressed his pride in the fact that his grandfather was probably the first man in the world to plant a thousand acres of corn.

The boy, William, was exceedingly mischievous and difficult to manage. He used to say that he must have been a natural insurgent. One of the first of his insurrections came when he was ten years old. A political speaker was making an open-air address at night. The boy got out one or two of his fellows with eggs, and plastered the speaker from behind trees. The next day placards were posted offering a reward for the arrest and conviction of the offenders.

"I could see myself behind the bars," he said in telling about it, "and I was overwhelmed at the thought of the disgrace I would bring on the family. So I determined to run away. I got on board the train. But my father had heard of my plan from my brother and he came and took me off. He asked me and I told him the full truth about what I had done, and I shall never forget the note of satisfaction in his voice when he said: 'Well, thank God, you are not a liar, anyway.'

"He told me to come to him always when I was in trouble and he would see me through. I realized then what a good father mine was."

It was part of his father's theory of child training never to give his son spending money unless

William R. Nelson
at the Age of Six
From a daguerreotype

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he earned it by work. Once he wanted money to pay his way to a circus, and he went to his father for it.

"You should earn the money," his father said. "No person should have money to spend that he has not earned." And then, with a twinkle in his eye, he added, "Your mother wants that wood carried in. You do that, put it where she wants it and I will pay you fifty cents."

He earned the money, and he used to say that he enjoyed the circus all the more from having "worked his way in."

The active, restless, unmanageable boy was finally sent to the college, now the university, of Notre Dame, a school at that time famous for its strictness of discipline. "It was a sort of Botany Bay for bad boys," he explained in after years to a friend who inquired how it happened that his father, a vestryman in an Episcopal Church, sent him to a Catholic school. His own boyhood gave him sympathy with mischievous boys, particularly with those who showed initiative and enterprise. Late in life, when Notre Dame conferred on him the degree of doctor of laws, he developed his theory of young America in a letter to the Reverend Father Cava-

naugh, president of the university. It is so characteristic of the man that it is worth quoting in full:

Had I been able to be present I should have perhaps ventured to say a word in behalf of the bad boy as exemplified in my own case. The bad boy gets so much correction on all sides that perhaps a word of reassurance to him would not be altogether amiss.

I recall that my chief end in life before I was sent to Notre Dame was to break up whatever school I was attending. My good father finally determined on Notre Dame as a last resort, and I was sent there in the hope that the fathers might succeed in bringing me up in the way I should go. My first experience was shortly after my arrival, when a circus came to town. We boys sent a petition asking leave to attend, and our request was promptly denied. Whereupon we held an indignation meeting in the yard and unanimously resolved to revolt. As I had been there only a few days I did not feel justified in taking a lead in this revolution, but was ready to go along. To my intense surprise, when the angry mob reached the gate there were only three of us left. We persisted and saw about the worst circus it was ever my lot to attend. I suppose our apprehension had something to do with our failure to enjoy the performance. When we got back there was some discussion as to whether we should be expelled or merely disciplined. The

more lenient counsel prevailed, and I was assigned several pages of Pollock's "Course of Time" to commit to memory. My instructor, I suppose, thought he had laid out a three days' task for me, but I had in those days an unusually alert memory and I was ready for him in a short time. When he saw how light the penalty was he assigned several more yards of the poem for me to commit. Whereupon I refused and said I had done my task and proposed to do no more. So I found a nail and drove it through the book and clinched it on the other side, thus making sure that any further study of Pollock was out of the question.

He at once appealed to Father Dillon, and I have never forgotten the principles of justice as laid down by that broad-minded man. His judgment was that I had done my task, fulfilled the penalty, and was entitled to release. As the others, who were not so guilty as I, were all at work and as it was manifestly unfair to give them a severer punishment, he suggested that justice and mercy demanded that they be set free at the same time.

During the years that I was at the school I suppose there was never an opportunity for a rebellion that I did not take advantage of. I have always attributed my insurgent instincts to the one-eighth of Irish blood that I have. I always resented parental restraint — not from lack of affection for my father, but because I never enjoyed being bossed. I have to confess that I don't to this

day. It was my disposition to feel that nobody had any rights over me. Notre Dame, however, did the best it could with such unpromising material, and I have always looked back on it with regard and affection, even though it did inform my father at the end of the second year that the instructors felt they could get along without my influence thereafter. But the fact that, in spite of such a record, the university has conferred a doctorate of laws upon me, ought, perhaps, to afford encouragement to mischievous boys and make them feel that their case is not altogether hopeless.

At the end of his second year at Notre Dame the head of the school gave him a letter to deliver to his father.

"William, what does this mean?" his father asked, when he handed over the letter.

"I don't know, father," the boy answered.

"Well, I dread to open it."

"Goodness knows I dread to have you."

The letter suggested that the boy would better not return to the school. So he decided to become a lawyer, and, because of the opportunity it gave him to study law, he became a deputy clerk of the circuit court at Fort Wayne.

Before he became of age he was admitted to

the bar, and he began the practice of law in a small way, and also traded in real estate.

A minor incident of this period of his life illustrates the combination of self-reliance, energy, and imagination that were to mark his whole career. He was only nineteen years old when the agitation for the Pacific railroads was taking definite shape, and various routes were under discussion. He decided that the best route was westward from Fort Smith, Arkansas, and he actually started for that city to promote the enterprise. The notion that it was too much of an undertaking for a boy of that age never entered his head. All his life he had a great liking for ambitious boys. For, as he said, he knew from his own experience that they felt equal to anything. He got as far as Memphis on his Fort Smith enterprise before his father was able to convince him that he had better stay by Fort Wayne.

That was in 1860, and the question of the preservation of the Union was forcing itself on public attention. That the boy, William Nelson, was already beginning to be a leader in the community is shown by a contemporary newspaper item.

The files of Dawson's Daily Times of Fort Wayne contain the report of a "Great Union Mass

Meeting" which was held there Monday evening, December 17, 1860. The account says: —

The meeting was composed of the substantial business men of this town, without distinction of party. Upon motion of Smallwood Noel, Esq., B. W. Oakley was called to the chair, and on motion of L. M. Hinde, William R. Nelson was appointed secretary.

His father was one of a committee named to draft resolutions, which were adopted, opposing secession, and further declaring: —

We here to-night mutually pledge ourselves to stand by the Union of the States and proclaim to this Nation that Indiana is for the Union first, last, and forever.

Opposition from his father kept him from going to the front, and he stayed by his law practice and other business until the close of the war. Then he and a boyhood friend started for Georgia to make their fortune growing sea-island cotton, which commanded a very high price. He had a few thousand dollars, his partner had a like amount, and they opened a general store in Savannah and bought a large plantation. The partner looked after the store and Mr. Nelson attended to the planting of

the cotton. By the time the first crop came in the price of cotton had dropped and the business was ruined. The partner stayed with the store to try and save it from complete loss, while Mr. Nelson returned to Fort Wayne and went into the contracting business. He built roads, bridges, and buildings. A large part of the Southern Illinois penitentiary at Chester was his work. He was the instigator of the first good-roads law passed in Indiana and built the first piece of road under that law. He introduced to Indiana the Nicholson pavement for city streets.

From this period dated his intense interest in good roads and good bridges, to which his newspaper was devoted in after years.

Indiana was famous then, as now, for politics. He was attracted into the game because it was a game, and because every form of social activity appealed to him. Samuel J. Tilden was the man who opened his eyes to the fact that politics was more than a sport; that it could be made the means of achieving for the common good. On one of his visits to New York he called on the Democratic leader, and the acquaintanceship then begun resulted in his becoming the manager for Indiana of

Tilden's candidacy for the presidential nomination, on the ground, as he used to say, that he was the only Indiana Democrat who was not himself a candidate for the Presidency. At first it had been Tilden's courage in fighting the Tweed Ring that had attracted him. But through their association he caught the spirit of the constructive statesman. One of his distinct recollections was of Tilden remarking as he walked up and down the library at Gramercy Park: "While it is a great thing to lead armies, it is a greater thing to lead the minds of men."

Tilden became one of his heroes. His confidence in the judicial system suffered a profound shock when the Supreme Court justices on the Electoral Commission decided for Hayes by a party vote, and the failure of the Democratic Party in 1880 to renominate Tilden caused him definitely to break with the Democratic organization and to become an independent — though not a neutral — in politics. In the campaign in 1904 for the nomination of Joseph W. Folk as Democratic candidate for Governor of Missouri, he made the Tilden biography virtually The Star's campaign text-book, and over his desk

to the very last hung Tilden's portrait with those of Cleveland and Roosevelt.

His interest in politics never interfered with the vigorous prosecution of his business, and by the time he was thirty-five years old he had accumulated some two hundred thousand dollars. Then suddenly nearly his entire accumulation was swept away. Throughout the years after the failure of his cotton-growing enterprise in Georgia his partner in Savannah had stayed in charge of the remnants of the business there, which had in it some promise of future success. Mr. Nelson had indorsed a great deal of paper for him, and had become responsible for many of his obligations. The partner failed, and his failure ruined Mr. Nelson financially.

Many years later a friend asked him about his feeling when he learned that he was ruined financially through no fault of his own.

"Lack of self-confidence," he replied, "was never one of my failings. I don't suppose I ever lost a minute's sleep over the affair. I knew I was going to win in the end."

This incident was the turning-point of his career. All he saved from the wreck was an interest in the Sentinel of Fort Wayne. He had invested in

that newspaper, which his father had once owned, while he was managing the Tilden campaign. The possibilities of moving men in the mass through the medium of journalism appealed powerfully to him. He saw in the newspaper an instrument which promised far greater opportunity for achievement than a political party. To this new work he turned with enthusiasm. Experience for a year or two as manager of the Fort Wayne paper convinced him that he had found his calling and that he needed a wider field than was offered in the small Indiana city.

CHAPTER II

FOUNDING AND GROWTH OF THE KANSAS CITY STAR

It was not chance that impelled Mr. Nelson in 1880 to sell his interest in the Sentinel of Fort Wayne and go to Kansas City. Before settling down in the rough-hewn town that Kansas City was then, he scrutinized the whole wide Western field from St. Louis to San Francisco, and also some cities in the East, with an estimating and prophetic eye. His choice of a place in which to locate narrowed down to three cities, Brooklyn, St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri. He then weighed the advantages and the future, as he saw it, of those three cities, and cast his lot with Kansas City as confidently as if there had been no rival cities in the contest for future greatness in the Great West. The wisdom of that decision never fluttered in a moment's doubt in the years that followed.

Samuel E. Morss was the partner of Mr. Nelson in the Fort Wayne Sentinel, and he was his partner also in the founding of The Star, the first issue of

which appeared as The Kansas City Evening Star, September 18, 1880. It was a paper of four small pages of six narrow columns each.

The following extract is from an editorial in that first issue, the first editorial ever written for The Star: —

It is the commercial center of the great Missouri Valley, and no city in the country contains within itself greater possibilities or offers brighter prospects for the future. No city in the land is growing more rapidly or attracting more attention in all quarters. It is universally conceded that Kansas City, in a very few years, will be one of the largest and most important cities in America. Having entire confidence in the future of this city, The Evening Star enters the field without a doubt that it will achieve unqualified success and in a very short time become one of the recognized institutions of Kansas City.

The health of Mr. Morss failed in the first year in Kansas City, and he was compelled to retire from active work and devote several years to physical restoration. Mr. Nelson became sole owner and editor of The Star. Mr. Morss was consul-general to Paris during President Cleveland's second administration and returned to Indiana and became

The Kansas City Evening Star.

VOL. I., NO. 1. SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1880. PRICE, TWO CENTS.

BUSINESS TOPICS.

[illegible]

TWELVE O'CLOCK.

YELLOW JACK

The Plague Breaks Out on the Lower Mississippi.

Seventy-five Cases and a Number of Deaths Near New Orleans.

[illegible]

A HORROR AT ST. PAUL.

The Police Make a Shocking Discovery in a Shovel.

[illegible]

MAINE.

[illegible]

GUN CLUB SHOOT.

[illegible]

ADDITIONAL CITY NEWS.

[illegible]

THE GREAT SHOW.

Opening of the Kansas City Exposition Next Monday.

Splendid Attractions Promised—A Large Crowd Expected.

[illegible]

THE GRAND BARBECUE

In Progress To-day at the South End.

To Celebrate the Opening of the Switch in the Addition.

[illegible]

THREE O'CLOCK.

BAD ACCIDENT.

[illegible]

THE BARBECUE.

[illegible]

GENERAL PRODUCE.

[illegible]

COMMERCIAL.

[illegible]

First Issue of The Kansas City Star

owner and editor of the Indianapolis Sentinel. A warm friendship existed between him and Mr. Nelson and continued until the death of Mr. Morss.

The year 1880 was a good one for the coming of a paper that meant to "become a recognized institution of Kansas City" and have an active part in the development of the town. The impulse to civic and commercial greatness had thrilled the community and quickened its ambition. But there was little in the city to attract except the energy of the people and the golden glow of the future.

Kansas City was then the muddiest town in the wide, wet world. There were no pavements and only a few plank sidewalks. A few street-cars bobbed along behind tired mules. The Kaw River furnished the city water. Grace or beauty or utility did not exist. Everything was yet to be done to make the town into a great and beautiful city, "a good place to live in."

The people of the raw town of the new West welcomed the newspaper cordially, the papers already established patted the journalistic baby on the head kindly and called it the Twilight Twinkler, and so The Star began to shine from its first little offices, upstairs, at 407 and 409 Delaware Street.

The price of the paper then was two cents a copy. The price of the other papers was five cents. There were very few pennies in circulation in the West then; a nickel was the smallest coin in general use, and it was difficult for newsboys to get hold of enough pennies to make change. So Mr. Nelson brought to town a keg of cent pieces bright from the mint, and the newsboys were provided for.

The paper had a good circulation from the start. At the end of its first month The Star announced that it had "a great many more readers in Kansas City than any other newspaper published here."

But that very increase in circulation made the problems of its publication more difficult, because, as subscribers increased, cost of printing went up, and the income from advertising did not keep pace with expense. The new paper was pushed to make both ends meet.

The small capital brought to Kansas City by Mr. Nelson soon melted away. Then he had to borrow from his friends back in Indiana, where he had established a good credit. Without this credit, he said, in after years, he must have failed. But he never lost confidence. He felt from the outset

that he would succeed if he could keep his creditors from "sawing his legs off," as he put it, before he had had a fair chance. The struggle lasted four years.

The thing he most needed was a press with capacity sufficient to print quickly the copies demanded by the circulation. The old press with which he started was incapable of doing it. It was strained to its utmost every day, and still it fell short of the demand.

And then one day the agent for the Potter perfecting press came to town. Under the spur of his presence, Mr. Nelson laid his problem before Colonel Kersey Coates, at that time the town's most progressive and far-seeing citizen, and Coates helped him to borrow at a bank the five thousand dollars necessary to make the first payment. The press was installed September 18, 1884, the fourth anniversary of the founding of the paper. That day marked the beginning of The Star's larger success.

The Coates incident was notable because it followed a period of bitter enmity on the part of that fiery pioneer. When The Star began publication, Colonel Coates owned the town opera house.

It was a large hall on the second floor of a poorly constructed building, without proper exits. The new editor felt it was a public menace, and said so in his newspaper. Colonel Coates flared up and publicly denounced him as a blackmailer. But he soon came to see that the young man from Indiana was right. He went to The Star office and apologized. "I am going to reconstruct my opera house," he told Mr. Nelson. "The town needs such a newspaper as yours, and if you ever need help, come to me." That invitation he fulfilled in helping in the purchase of the perfecting press.

The Star gained in circulation and business every year after its first new press was installed, but years went by before the owner took any of the profits out. He put them back into the paper, enlarging it and improving it all the time, on the theory that a newspaper owed all to its readers that it could possibly give.

At first The Star had no Associated Press franchise and had difficulty in getting telegraph news service. But in 1882, with borrowed money, he bought The Mail, a small paper with an Associated Press franchise, and thus The Star obtained the telegraph news service it so much needed.

In 1889 The Star moved to a new building erected especially for it at 804–06 Wyandotte Street. Here it had two new Potter presses, capable of printing twenty-four thousand papers of eight pages an hour, and the wheels of progress began to move faster. For five years this rented building was satisfactory, but in 1894 The Star again moved to a new home at the northeast corner of Eleventh Street and Grand Avenue. This was at that time one of the finest newspaper buildings in the country, and Mr. Nelson believed it would prove commodious enough for many years. The printing equipment there consisted of three quadruple presses capable of issuing sixty thousand sixteen-page papers an hour. This soon became inadequate and the capacity was doubled by adding one more quadruple and one octuple press. In 1911 The Star again moved to a new office between Seventeenth and Eighteenth Streets, occupying the width of a whole block between Grand Avenue and McGee Street. Here The Star had six sextuple presses with a combined capacity of printing four hundred and twenty thousand papers of twelve pages an hour. Within two years those six presses were converted into

octuples, capable of printing four hundred and twenty thousand sixteen-page papers an hour. More space was provided in this office than is in any other office in the world, and the builder hoped it would house the paper for at least half a century.

The first Sunday edition of The Star was issued April 29, 1894. The morning Times was absorbed and its first issue appeared as the morning edition of The Star November 18, 1901.

The subscription price of The Star was never increased. It was ten cents a week, delivered by carrier, in its first years, when it issued a four-page paper each week-day afternoon, and it was ten cents a week, delivered by carrier, when it gave thirteen papers a week, morning, evening, and Sunday.

The Weekly Kansas City Star was founded by Mr. Nelson March 6, 1890, an eight-page paper for farmers at a subscription price of twenty-five cents a year. Its circulation grew steadily until it had reached three hundred and fifty thousand at the time of Mr. Nelson's death. It went into every State of this Union and to many foreign countries.

In the early years of struggle to place his newspaper upon a firm foundation, and in the years of success and prosperity which followed, Mr. Nelson was encouraged and sustained by his wife, whom he married November 29, 1881, a little more than a year after he founded The Star. She was Ida Houston, daughter of Robert Houston of Champaign, Illinois. A daughter, Laura, was born to them, who became the wife of Irwin R. Kirkwood of Kansas City.

CHAPTER III

PULLING A CITY OUT OF THE MUD

In the first issue of his paper Mr. Nelson said editorially: —

The Evening Star will labor with especial zeal and earnestness in behalf of all measures tending to advance the interests of Kansas City and develop the resources of the great Missouri Valley.

These interests and resources he first visualized as good streets and good roads. As he expressed the idea editorially: —

The city is its streets; the country is its roads; the Nation is its highways of rail and water. Civilization follows no dim forest trail; that is always the savage's route. Civilization treads established thoroughfares. Everything depends upon accessibility, and in human intercourse accessibility means pathways, roads, streets. Markets are beggared when buyer and seller cannot meet. Education languishes when mud blockades the road to the little red schoolhouse. Literature must have circulation, or be impotent. Art cannot ennoble or uplift or delight the multitude it cannot reach.

Continual, perpetual, is the demand upon the

streets, the roads, the thoroughfares. Great as was the greatest of the Cæsars, greatest was he as a road builder.

It was inevitable that the newspaper founded by Mr. Nelson, which was intended to enter into the everyday life of the community that sustained it, and was to be concerned in everything that affected the welfare of this community, would find the streets a theme for frequent discourse; the streets and their suburban connections, the country roads; and their transcontinental cousins, the railways.

He came quickly to the conclusion that the first thing essential to the city's progress was traversable streets. The foot that was to make the next "giant stride forward" must first be pulled out of the mud.

And there was mud everywhere. The site of Kansas City was rough and hilly and seamed with canyons. In the clearing away of trees and brushwood and the breaking of ground for buildings, the red earth was bared to rain and snow, and great gullies were worn in the slopes, down which mud ran in streams. The streets were almost impassable.

No one seemed to care. The new town was full of exploiters trying to make hasty fortunes to carry

away and spend in more attractive places. They had no intention of making homes there, they had no intention of making a city. Their sole purpose was to coin some quick money out of the town's necessities and pull out. The attitude of these men toward the city is illustrated in a story Mr. Nelson related.

Two of the newcomers found themselves neighbors in Main Street stores. Each had brought in a stock of goods and was disposing of them at a modest profit of a couple of hundred per cent, with a view to catching the earliest train back East. Standing on the wooden sidewalk contemplating the sea of mud in the street the newest arrival said to his neighbor: —

"You 've got the worst mudhole of a town here I ever saw. Why don't you pave your street?"

"Me pave it!" exclaimed the other. "I don't care if they never pave it. I live in Louisville."

Such was the town and such was the feeling in it when Mr. Nelson made The Star its champion and started on the task of making it a city, a city with homes and a citizenship, a public spirit and a community feeling.

And so The Star was only a few months

old when he published the following plain statement of its public policy upon roads and other things, a policy from which it never swerved: —

Individuals profit by judicious and liberal expenditures of money. So do cities. Kansas City has reached a point when she must make such expenditures if she is to occupy the proud position which is within her reach. The pinching economy, the picayunish policy, the miserable parsimony, which characterize our city government must now be abandoned, or the city's growth will be most seriously retarded and her best interests greatly crippled.

Kansas City needs good streets, good sidewalks, good sewers, decent public buildings, better street lights, more fire protection, a more efficient police force, and many other things which are necessary to the health, prosperity, and growth of a great city. She needs these improvements now. They will cost money and a great deal of it. The Evening Star is greatly mistaken if an overwhelming majority of the taxpayers are not perfectly willing to spend the money, if they have any assurance that it will be honestly and judiciously expended.

To the city streets, to roads, and to transportation Mr. Nelson, in The Star, devoted more space — more actual area of argument, protest,

information, and appeal — than to any other one subject. Street-paving was the first public improvement he advocated, and he dealt not in generalities, but in facts and figures, and modern instances and ancient. His first triumph as a defender of the faith was in preventing the gift of the city's streets to a transportation company that had demonstrated its unwillingness to furnish adequate street-car service. The greatest municipal achievement, in which Mr. Nelson aided — the parks — is inseparable from the interlacing and interlinking system of parkways and boulevards — streets of superfine quality, demonstrating by the manner of their construction and their systematic maintenance what intelligent road-making might mean.

Upon the subject of streets in all its manifold phases he was always busy through the columns of The Star. Scientific construction, the grading and draining, the proper width for economy and the correct crowning, foundation and surface, choice of materials as demonstrated by experience or by test or by limitation of expenditure, guttering and curbing, sidewalks, the adornment by turf and by trees — all of these he studied and

THE KANSAS CITY STAR. SIX O'CLOCK

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WILL RELEASE 93 MILLION

TRAIN NO. 1 INTO STATION

THE ALLIES BRACE UP

SHELLS 3 MILES INLAND

FRENCH AIR PATROL BETTER

A PROSECUTOR ON THE JOB

CARRANZA TO BE OUSTED.

DRINKING HAS "GONE OUT."

GUN TRAINS AID ALLIES.

POTTED FIVE GERMAN FLIERS.

PREPARE ANTWERP FOR SIEGE.

MORE TROOPS TO THE CANAL.

TURKS FIGHT GERMANS.

PAY BANK HEAD $50,000

The Kansas City Star in Mr. Nelson's last year

discussed in The Star. The effective care and maintenance of the streets, the building of bridges and viaducts, the lighting of the streets, the obstruction of sidewalks, the flushing of catch-basins, the projection of bill-boards, the dripping dirt wagon, the reckless driver of wagon or motor car, the proper guidance of traffic, the sore-shouldered and overworked dray horse, the encroaching push-cart, were details of the mighty subject of streets which he kept constantly before the public. And so were the police, the street-cars, the rules of the road, and public-service franchises.

Through the years of his editorship of The Star he printed, it might almost be said, miles of argument in favor of good roads, not only in Jackson County, but in all the Southwest. He sent members of The Star's staff to good-roads conventions; he sent out lecturers upon the subject of good roads, organized good-roads tours, helped lay out cross-state and cross-continent highways, had pamphlets about good roads printed by the thousand for free distribution, sent men to the legislature to help draft and pass good-roads laws, and preached the gospel of good roads and good streets in every conceivable form of argument.

He knew the cost of every form of road-building and sought to guard the public interests against the plunderings of contractors. Among the hardest fights carried on by him were those against combines of road and bridge and paving contractors.

The bridges of the adjacent country were shockingly bad. He advocated permanent bridges, and the old plank bridge gave way to the iron bridge as the next step of advancement. In the building of those iron bridges there developed a "graft" by which flimsy material was used at a price that would have given good material. He entered upon a campaign to stop this. He gave the name of "tin bridge" to this class of structure, and urged the building of bridges of native stone or concrete, with artistic treatment. As a lesson to the public he built, at his own expense, a beautiful arched bridge of native stone over Brush Creek, at Rockhill Road, and not far from it he induced the county to build an artistic bridge of concrete.

It was a favorite phrase of his that "transportation follows the lines of least resistance." He realized the effect that transportation lines have upon the founding and building of cities and the

welfare and progress of communities, and he used the influence of The Star to induce and aid railroads to build to Kansas City, and he fought all attempts to establish freight rates that were too high. When the railroads discriminated against Kansas City in their freight tariffs he began the campaign for the reëstablishment of steamboat transportation upon the Missouri River. Before the days of railroads Kansas City was founded as a steamboat landing, because at the mouth of the Kaw River, where the Missouri bends sharply to the north, was the natural point of distribution, to all the Southwest, of the freight that came up the river. At the great bend were the eastern termini of the overland trails, to Santa Fé, to the Pike's Peak region and all the country beyond, to California and to Oregon.

As a relief from oppressive and restrictive freight rates that came later, when railroads had driven the boats from the river, he advocated the establishment of river traffic again. The campaign resulted in the building of the A. L. Mason, a large steamboat which plied between Kansas City and St. Louis. When it had accomplished its purpose of lowering rail rates the loyalty of merchants to

it slackened and it was forced out of the traffic. In a few years the rates became more oppressive and Mr. Nelson began another campaign for another and permanent line of boats on the Missouri. "Navigate the river" became his slogan. He went into every phase of the subject of water transportation as an effective preventive of high freight rates. He sent men everywhere to gather information. He preached the gospel of water transportation for years before the public became interested enough to take hold. At last the sentiment was ripe, a public company was organized and more than one million dollars in stock was subscribed. To this enterprise Mr. Nelson contributed fifty thousand dollars, not as a commercial proposition, but out of loyalty to Kansas City.

A line of boats and barges was bought or built and put in operation. Its accomplishments are a part of the history of the upbuilding of Kansas City.

In the same spirit of loyalty to Kansas City he advocated the building of an adequate railway passenger station to take the place of the old outgrown and inadequate depot. This campaign went on for a number of years and contributed largely

toward the building of a magnificent Union Station which cost six million dollars, and of a terminal system sufficient to care for the traffic of the growing city, the whole costing in the neighborhood of fifty million dollars.

CHAPTER IV

PARKS AND BOULEVARDS

When William R. Nelson went to Kansas City with his daring idea of a two-cent newspaper the young city had a population that was approaching sixty thousand. The people had faith in the vision that upon the Missouri bluffs was to be built an important city, but few of them even glimpsed the greatness to which that city would grow within a few years. Mr. Nelson was one of those who did see it, and he began to plan for it with sure foresight.

Almost everybody in Kansas City had come from the country or from smaller towns, and everything in this new town of the West, which had sprung up almost overnight, was so much bigger and better than the bulk of the population had been accustomed to that the idea of making the town better and beautiful did not appeal to them.

What was a city, anyway, but a chaos of ugly brick buildings and factory chimneys belching black smoke?

But Mr. Nelson visioned a mighty city and a city beautiful. He was probably the only man in Kansas City who saw that the bluffs and hills and ravines had elements of real beauty, and he went to work on the task of developing the city for the millions who were later to live in it.

May 19, 1881, when The Star was only eight months old, he began the long, long struggle for public parks, which finally, after many reverses and delays, triumphed splendidly. Upon that day, in concluding an editorial upon the subject, he said:—

The officials may dodge the issue and seek to excuse themselves by saying the new city charter prohibits the expenditure of money for any such purpose. This, however, will not strictly satisfy the people nor condone official negligence in this matter, as special legislation could easily be had, provided there was an earnest movement for the purpose.

That was the beginning of a campaign that continued for fifteen years before Kansas City, with soul uplifted, sat in joy upon its first park bench. The people of Kansas City who read The Star—and that included virtually the whole population—had parks and boulevards for dinner every night.

In speaking in later days of that struggle he said: —

The most stubborn obstacle to the progress of a growing city is lack of foresight — the inability to comprehend the needs of the future. Stagnation, obstruction, and opposition are its fruits, and the only way to overcome it is by ceaseless effort. In The Star's endeavor as advocate for the people of Kansas City the thing that withstood siege longest has been this lack of understanding of the innate greatness of Kansas City and of the certainty of its development. That it was which, by refusing a competitive street-railway franchise and attempting to endow the miserable lines existing in 1884 with a thirty-year lease of life, would have made cable lines and the later use of electricity impossible. Neither company nor council could imagine the Kansas City of twenty years later. The same defective vision caused the attempt to manacle the city with a high-priced, small-supply gas franchise in 1895. Of all the measures for which The Star labored, the one most despairingly blocked by this spirit of benighted non-comprehension was the project of parks.

Mr. Nelson entered upon the campaign for parks in no haphazard way. He obtained all the available details and particulars of park acquisition and maintenance in other cities. He devised plans of pro-

cedure and methods of attaining the best for the greatest number in the character and location of the pleasure grounds. The apportionment of cost and the manner of payment were inexhaustible themes.

Leading citizens, including Judge J. K. Cravens, Frank Faxon, A. R. Meyer, and Robert Gillham, were converted to the cause and enlisted in it. Engineers were employed by Mr. Nelson to make studies of parkways and boulevards and to secure practical information about their construction. He had a park law drafted and backed it to the point where the State Supreme Court poked a potent foot through it; undaunted, he went immediately to work upon another which should be less attractive to the Supreme Court toe. Every argument was presented in every conceivable form, over and over and yet over again.

After a few years of this ceaseless agitation it began to dawn upon a certain element of the community that The Star's argument was not mere prattle, but the precursor of facts and action. That "certain element" was largely composed of wealthy landowners — men made rich in spite of themselves by the increased value of their farms

as the city overflowed upon and around them. The proposal to provide lawns and woods and meadows and playgrounds and flower gardens for the people met with no approval from those gentlemen, amply endowed as they were with woods and meadows of their own, if not with playgrounds and flower gardens. A surprisingly large number of them came out of the tall grass, where they had been eluding public notice and subscription lists, and with great energy began throwing brickbats at Mr. Nelson and The Star.

A movement to oppose city beautification was organized. Public meetings were held and orators engaged to attack the man who was regarded as responsible for the extravagance. In the fight were enlisted many home-owners who really believed that the building of these improvements would entail an expense that would sweep away their homes and ruin them. "Confiscation" and "robbery" became their watchwords.

"What do we want of breathing-spaces when half the town is vacant lots!" exclaimed the anti-park orators.

People who had burned them for fire-wood could see no glory in trees. They ridiculed in every

conceivable way the "Baron," as they dubbed Mr. Nelson, who saw beauty in trees and flowers and parks and shady driveways.

The Star was very considerate of those enemies of parks. In fancy it organized them into a "Hammer and Padlock Club," the suggested symbolism being a hammer wherewith to beat the life out of all public improvement projects, and a padlock with which to protect the pocketbook from invasion. The Star invented amusing orations for them and devised many a merry quip and laughable cartoon for their entertainment.

The spirit of progress finally won. A comprehensive scheme, proposed by the first park board under the courageous presidency of A. R. Meyer, was adopted. Gradually the town saw the new Vision, and Kansas City's superb system of parks and boulevards, with the noblest park of all, the gift of Thomas H. Swope, soon became a reality, and those who had been objectors became the champions of parks.

Long before there was a park law or a park system in Kansas City, Mr. Nelson undertook to make Warwick Boulevard an object lesson to the people. Along it he planted elm trees, which his

studies had convinced him were the best shade trees for Kansas City.

After his death, one of the moving letters that came to The Star was from a woman living on that street who wrote that for her the monument to his memory was the great elm tree of his planting that stood before her door.

Before arriving at the conclusion that the elm tree was best, Mr. Nelson had made a study of the merits of other kinds of trees. In particular he experimented with the broad-leafed laurel, to see whether it would grow in Kansas City. He had his own nurseries in which trees were planted and their growth carefully noted. He studied the methods of transplanting trees so that Kansas City might not have to wait for trees to grow along its boulevards, but might have them planted there full grown for the benefit of the generation already on earth.

He studied grasses and sods with the same exhaustive care, to determine which kind was best for the ornamentation of grass plots between pavements, and his researches into the best kinds of flowers and shrubs for street and park ornamentation covered that subject in all its ramifications.

He imported squirrels from adjoining States and turned them loose in the parks to add to their attractiveness and to ruralize them.

His interest in parks was not confined to Kansas City. He held that if parks were good for that city they were good for every city and for every town. He had pamphlets printed showing the advantages of parks for small towns, and sent them out by thousands. If he learned of a town that was talking of getting a park, he would send a member of his staff there to encourage the people and to stir up their civic pride by writing in The Star about it. The gospel of parks spread into all the country roundabout, and even to Western cities larger than Kansas City.

After the parks and boulevards in Kansas City had been acquired and built, the people soon realized that they were one of the city's greatest assets, and this feeling was expressed by the Commercial Club of Kansas City, the day after the death of Mr. Nelson, when it paraphrased the tribute to the Roman emperor: —

"He found his city mud and left it marble."

CHAPTER V

IN THE CAUSE OF GOOD GOVERNMENT

The Star began with one standard — public service. Everything was secondary to that. From its first issue Mr. Nelson used The Star to serve Kansas City with all his might, and in no way was this more effectively done than in his continuous fight, through thirty-five years, in the cause of good government for City, County, State and Nation.

The first city election in the experience of The Star came in the spring of 1881, seven months after its founding. March 10, of that year, under the caption "The City Election," The Star said:—

> The Star has no axe to grind, no candidate to elect, no party to serve. Its only interest is in the growth and prosperity of Kansas City and the proper administration of the city government. It is for the best men, entirely regardless of party. It is, however, forced to admit that most of the men who are seeking nominations from both parties are utterly unfit for the positions to which they aspire. Briefless barristers, to whom no sane

First Home of The Star
407 Delaware Street

To avoid
disappointment

man would intrust a lawsuit involving five dollars, want to be city attorney. Irresponsible and incapable men, whom no one would think of selecting for cashier or bookkeeper, ask for the city treasurership. Ignorant peddlers of whisky aspire to the city council. Such of these men who seek nominations may expect that The Star will tell the truth about them. The voters of the city have a right to know all the facts as to the character and capacity of those who ask their suffrage. These they cannot find in their party organs.

Nowhere was electoral dishonesty and outrage more flagrant and obvious than in Kansas City in the years following the founding of The Star. These culminated in 1892–94 in a series of wholesale and daring frauds. Politics in both the city and county was dominated by a criminal gang, assured of immunity from punishment. Public officers charged with the enforcement of the law were in visible alliance with lawbreakers. Protected gambling was notorious. The fee system was in full force and was used for the wholesale blackmailing of members of the underworld. Elections were in charge of men who were absolute tools of the gang. False registrations were by thousands, and the names of more than a thousand well-known

citizens were stricken off the poll-books and they were refused the right to vote. Men were beaten and thrown out of poll-booths. Rowdies intimidated voters and kept them from the polls. It was often dangerous for a man to attempt to cast a vote in opposition to the nominees of the gang in control.

The frauds of the election of 1894 were worse than all that had gone before, but so effective had been the work of The Star in denouncing and exposing the election crooks that the city and county were aroused, and in spite of all the fraud the gang ticket was beaten at the polls. But the gang sought to put its men into office by forgery of the election returns after the whole city knew they were beaten.

The Star called for an indignation meeting of honest citizens. A prosecution fund was raised and a committee of safety was chosen and twenty-one indictments for election frauds were returned. Twelve of the indicted men fled; one committed suicide.

By offering rewards for the arrest and conviction of election crooks, by employing detectives on election day, and finally by appeals to the legis-

lature for better election laws, Mr. Nelson continued this campaign unremittingly the rest of his life. In his last illness he specified it as the big piece of unfinished business which The Star had on hand.

His fundamental democracy made him the earnest supporter of movements to increase the control of the people over their government — the direct primary, popular election of senators, the initiative, referendum, and recall and the commission form of government. In one of his letters of instruction to the staff, for instance, he expressed his views in this fashion: —

The Initiative, the Referendum, and the Recall need frighten nobody who is on the square. If a man in office or in politics opposes them, he either misunderstands them, or he thinks he has cause for fear of their operation.

Public expenditures should be made with the utmost care and with all the publicity and formality necessary to insure fair competition and expert supervision. To waste or misapply funds intrusted to an officer chosen by the people to get their money's worth for them is a peculiarly contemptible sort of robbery. It is no less than taking advantage of a situation of unusual safety to pick the pockets of taxpayers most of whom can

afford no wastefulness in their expenditures, and to deprive all the people, especially the poor, of the service which the community funds are intended to provide for them. The grafter is not a hero, no matter how prosperous he may be, or how influential in politics.

Commission Government. Responsibility and concentrated authority are as essential to the management of a city as to the successful conduct of any other business. City government is business and nobody is interested in continuing the pretense that it is politics, except those who intend to make money out of it.

Mr. Nelson's interest in good government for cities was not confined to Kansas City. He took a personal interest in working for good municipal government in the fullest possible development of the municipal life of every city in Kansas and Missouri. Not only did he use the columns of The Star daily to bring about this result, but he insisted on paying the expenses of his reporters who went out upon invitation from different cities to speak on the subject of commission government or upon other features of municipal life.

"You must remember," he would say to the men engaged in such work, "that a reporter has something to do besides sitting at a desk and writ-

ing. He must have an idea and develop that idea in every possible way. It is his business to get results; to bring things about, whether it is writing an article or making a speech."

Thus, after a successful campaign for a municipal water-supply had been conducted in Kansas City, Kansas, Mr. Nelson suggested that a more efficient city government would be needed to operate the plant. "What do you know about commission government?" he asked the reporter who had been assigned to the campaign.

"Not a thing," replied the reporter, "except that I believe it is a good plan."

"If I were trying to help a city," said Mr. Nelson, "I would be looking around to find the best government in the world for it. And the place to find out about commission government is in the cities where they have commission government. We cannot afford to advocate it if it is not better than the old rule, and we must get the facts from commission government cities, and then tell the people of Kansas City, Kansas, what it is doing for those cities."

So he sent the reporter to commission-government cities to study the plan. As a result The Star

advocated commission government. In the first fight in Kansas City, Kansas, the plan was defeated. Only a few people could be found to take an interest in the movement.

When the reporter complained of this, Mr. Nelson said: "Well, did you expect them to forsake the traditions of a lifetime about municipal government in a single month? Remember that you, yourself, were not sure about commission government until you saw it in actual operation. The people will adopt commission government when they become acquainted with it. It is our business to tell them all about it, and to tell it over and over again until they get acquainted with it. Then they will adopt it. You can always trust the people to do what is best when they know what is best."

Commission government was adopted in less than two years.

But Mr. Nelson was not content with urging at home what he believed to be a great forward step in municipal government. He had a pamphlet published giving the results of commission government in various cities. These were sent out by the thousands from The Star office. At the same time he detailed a member of the staff to

speak on the subject in the surrounding territory. It became the custom when a commission-government campaign was on in any town to send to The Star for its literature and its speaker.

In the field of general politics the principle of the square deal always dominated The Star. In politics Mr. Nelson never looked at the label. He looked only at the movement, or the man, or the measure beneath the label.

The fact that policies which he believed were essential to the public welfare were sometimes defeated at the polls never caused an instant's wavering in his faith in the people. On such occasions he would quote Lincoln's maxim: "You can fool all the people part of the time and you can fool some of the people all the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time."

If things went wrong he had an unshaken faith that eventually they would go right. The trouble had been, he would say, that people had been so busy they had not given the matter proper attention. Perhaps The Star had not succeeded in making things clear. Next time the newspaper would take a fresh start and there should be no excuse for anybody failing to get the issue.

It was a favorite expression of his that nothing much was gained by a single battle. There would have to be a siege. And he had absolutely unwavering confidence that in the end the siege would be successful.

Several years before his death he issued a letter to The Star's staff. Several passages are typical of the views he was always emphasizing: —

The loss of a local election has never been a matter of very serious concern to The Star, which constantly is occupied with greater things than filling offices and is concerned in election results only as they accelerate or retard those more important purposes. . . .

In the permanent things, both great and small, with which The Star is engaged, every one having a part in its production should have a hand. Every one should clearly understand those purposes and have them constantly in mind, so that no news or information or influence bearing upon any of them shall be overlooked or disregarded. Every reporter, every writer, every desk-man should regard each of these subjects as a continuous assignment in which the best interest of the paper is concerned. And, in general, every one should strive to furnish ideas and suggestions; to find new opportunities for the paper's active service; new features of interest; new ways of doing things.

The letter went on to cite "square elections," "commission government," the "participation of churches in politics," and "development of public schools," as illustrations.

The very essence of what Mr. Nelson himself said time and again was expressed by the New York Evening Post in this comment on him and his lifework: —

As a result of all this, the hold of The Kansas City Star upon its community was such that in any situation that arose in the affairs of the city — the location of a park, the undertaking of public works, or what not — its voice was always potent and usually decisive. This does not by any means imply that it could decide elections. It carried no "vote" in its pocket. That is impossible for a truly independent paper; such a paper must always be ready to fight, when necessary, for the side that is almost sure to lose, and to take defeat with equanimity, after having done its best for the cause that it thinks right. This is what happened again and again to The Kansas City Star, but its influence and standing were left quite unimpaired by the adverse count of noses.

The immediate result of any stand Mr. Nelson took was always received by him with serenity. Whether the immediate battle was lost or won,

that battle was an incident. He went into every engagement with tremendous vigor. He was so confident of ultimate victory that victory always abided with him. That was the meaning of his prophetic words of encouragement to his staff—"The Star never loses." So that the battle was stoutly fought, so that the ideal was clearly seen and steadfastly kept in purpose, Mr. Nelson knew that a further step had been made along the course he had chosen for himself and for his newspaper.

CHAPTER VI

FIGHTING THE FRANCHISE GRABBERS

THROUGHOUT thirty-five years Mr. Nelson fought the franchise grabbers of Kansas City. From the first year of its existence The Star took an active hand in trying to get justice for the city from the men and corporations who were seeking more than their share. The files of the paper furnish a chronology of almost unceasing attempts of franchise promoters to best the city, and of The Star's fight for a square deal.

A year before his death he had a corps of copyists go through the files and cull out the most important arguments for fair street-railway franchises. Much of the material was merely summarized. This was later printed in book form. It filled twenty-five hundred columns of solid type the length and width of the news columns of The Star.

The record makes an interesting chapter in the history of public-utility franchises. It is of especial value in showing the evolution through experience and reflection of the ideas of an eminently practical

man who started with the current assumptions and was forced to conclusions that he once would have regarded as impossibly radical.

At the outset, Mr. Nelson put his faith in competition in conjunction with compensation to the municipality. In 1882, when The Star was just over a year old, it declared the issue in the spring campaign to be whether the street-railway horse-car monopoly should continue to control Kansas City.

The Star won its spurs in the service of Kansas City in this campaign. A few miserable mule cars were the total equipment of the street-car company, yet it was powerful enough at the city hall to prevent the granting of a privilege to operate a new system to a company that promised sufficient equipment and good service. Mr. Nelson immediately took up the cause of competition and good service, and his fight resulted in a grant to the new company, out of which grew the cable railway system that helped to make Kansas City.

The Star's position in that fight was stated in Mr. Nelson's usual definite and positive manner in a long editorial of March 31, 1882. This discussed the claims of Thomas Corrigan, head of the horse-car company, and ended as follows:—

One word more; The Evening Star again says, as it has said before, that it desires to see Mr. Corrigan treated with perfect fairness. It has not resorted to billingsgate or vituperation in its campaign against his monopoly. It has not sought to deprive him of any privilege to which he may be properly entitled. But it does insist that neither he nor any other man shall be allowed to possess an absolute monopoly of the street-railway business of Kansas City. It does insist that competition is necessary for the protection of the public. It does insist that he should be compelled to comply with the conditions of his charters, or give way to others who will. It does insist that he, like every other citizen, should be forced to obey the ordinances of the city. It does insist that he shall contribute his due proportion to the municipal revenues. It does insist that the city should not grant any more street-railway franchises except upon conditions similar to those imposed in other cities. In its position it believes itself to be sustained by the great power of public opinion, which must sooner or later prevail.

In 1884, when the city council "railroaded" a thirty-year franchise extension for the Corrigan Consolidated Street Railway Company — an extension that would have permitted the company to operate horse-cars on most of the system for thirty years with five-cent fares and no transfers — The

Star alone of Kansas City newspapers protested and called a mass meeting of indignation. As a result this "grab" was prevented by the mayor's veto.

Again The Star declared and reiterated over and over again the reason for its fight. In the issue of September 13, 1884, its attitude toward franchises was thus outlined:—

In the first place, the policy should contemplate, so far as possible, the prevention of monopolies in the transportation of passengers through the city. The next principle to be recognized in all ordinances granting or renewing franchises is that in every instance the city should reserve the right to alter or amend, in all particulars, the ordinances. Finally, in granting franchises, the city should receive all that they are reasonably worth.

In 1895 the city council granted, over The Star's protests, an extension of franchises worth millions of dollars to the Metropolitan Street Railway, with no compensation to the city. The Star denounced the deal as "infamous," but there was no way to prevent it. The referendum on franchises had not yet been invented.

It was in the contest of 1895 that The Star first prophesied with confidence the ultimate munici-

palization of all the public utilities of Kansas City. An editorial of June 7, 1895, said: —

The idea that the city ought to control its natural monopolies has been rapidly growing in favor here for the past few years. The waterworks will pass into the hands of the city without further delay. This will prepare the way for the acquisition in due season of other properties and institutions which are maintained through the use of franchises granted by the city. Kansas City has taken the first great step toward casting off the yoke of the monopolies, and its complete emancipation will follow as a matter of course.

But municipal ownership or the abandonment of all franchise grants was not then advocated as being immediately feasible. On June 18 of the same year The Star said: —

The different companies which have made use of the streets and alleys of Kansas City have been handsomely reimbursed for the investments which they have made, and as each comes suing for a new lease of life it is the right and the duty of the city to demand a fair equivalent for its franchises, which have greatly increased in value with the growth in population and the vast accretion of commercial and industrial interests, which are centered here and which will multiply indefinitely as the years go by.

And that was followed on August 1, 1895, by the statement: —

No franchises should be given under any circumstances in the future which may control the great public needs of the city without at least an optional power of purchase on the part of the city, upon reasonable terms. The American people are just beginning to realize that if cities are not built for eternity, they are at least likely to exist long enough to justify a long look into the future. Kansas City should build for the Twentieth Century without delay.

The grant of 1895, extending to 1925 all the franchises that had been absorbed by the Metropolitan Company, was the beginning of a series of attempts on the part of the street-railway owners to get franchise grants, not for operating purposes, but for melon-cutting purposes. In 1902 such a grant was obtained, with The Star fighting against it as usual. It proved deficient from the standpoint of the melon-cutters, and four years later the street railway proposed to build a viaduct to the stock yards in return for a ten-year extension. Business interests and many politicians were acquiescent. But Mr. Nelson sent a reporter to other cities to get information on franchise values,

and the statement made to The Star by Mayor Tom Johnson of Cleveland that a ten-year extension with five-cent fares could easily be capitalized for ten million dollars defeated the trade. "There will be nine more councils before the franchise expires," the head of the company remarked to the city counselor who was opposing the grant. "If we don't get it from one we will from another."

Mr. Nelson saw that the franchise would be the real issue in the next city campaign, and The Star fought on that basis. But the people were not to be convinced until the newly elected mayor began a series of farcical negotiations with the street railway, in which it was evident that the company was to write its own franchise. The Star was a chief factor in the defeat of the attempted grab in December, 1909.

Meanwhile the Roosevelt campaign for railroad regulation had directed public attention to the need of regulating all public utilities. Mr. Nelson had come to believe that there must be public control of street railways, and in 1907 The Star had backed Governor Folk's fight for the Enabling Act for Cities, under which city councils were empowered to create public-utility commissions. The

experience with the city government and its franchise of 1909 persuaded The Star's editor that city commissions were too directly subject to political influence. He turned with a degree of hope to a state commission, and gave vigorous aid in the struggle for such a commission, which was established by the legislature under the Major administration in 1913. But he was gradually brought to the conclusion that under existing conditions the attempt to regulate so resourceful an institution as a street railway fortified by a long term franchise must be futile.

Mr. Nelson's experience in street-railway fights, his knowledge of broken contracts, of the utility corporations' continual demand for "more," and of their constant corruptive control of politics, forced a logical development of The Star's attitude toward the use of the streets for public service. His essential position that the public interest comes first and that the private interest should pay for what it got and fulfill its obligations, never varied. But his ideas as to means for protecting the public interest from the private interest varied as the tactics of the private interests caused it to vary. From competition and compensation, through strict

The Star's Present Home, Grand Avenue to McGee Street
between Seventeenth and Eighteenth Streets

control and regulation, he reached the belief that no franchises whatever should be granted by a city. An illuminating editorial of June 7, 1914, entitled "Consistency," explained this growth of The Star's policy:—

Two years ago The Star cherished the hope that it would be possible to work out a franchise "based," as it was said at the time, "on the square deal," which would be for the interest of the city.

In the two years that have elapsed it has become convinced that this was a vain hope. It has become convinced further that there is no such thing as a square deal franchise.

A contract lasting thirty years, a whole generation, and adequately safeguarding the rights of the city, is out of the question. This has been demonstrated by the experience, not only of Kansas City, but of other cities as well.

The only arrangement that protects a city is the day-to-day or year-to-year permit, such as Detroit is now using, with the right of municipal purchase at the real value of the property. Then the company is put on its good behavior to furnish decent service, and the rate of fare can be adjusted from year to year to meet the actual cost of operation.

This is a reasonable and a workable plan. The only objection to it comes from financiers who

want to make a good thing out of long-time franchises — who dislike exceedingly to see the good old practice of melon-cutting abandoned. . . .

Since 1912 evidence has accumulated that demonstrates beyond possibility of doubt that this city should grant no more long-term franchises. The Star would be false to its deepest purposes, it would be fundamentally inconsistent, if it did not frankly admit what the evidence proves.

So long as it stands for the interests of Kansas City, The Star is consistent.

This editorial was published in what proved to be his last street railway campaign. The company had returned to the attack in 1914 with the acquiescence of a friendly city administration. Against the franchise then negotiated Mr. Nelson made the greatest fight of a great fighting career. When it was counted in at the polls, he was convinced that the majority was fraudulent, and at once set men to collecting evidence on the subject. The progress of this investigation was one of the things that absorbed his attention in his last illness.

One great reason why he opposed a long-time contract with the trolley system was his conviction that it was failing to meet the needs of a modern city and was becoming obsolete. His ideal

was a city covering the whole county, so that there should be no congested district and that every home might have its yard and garden. For such a city rapid transit was essential, and he felt that the surface trolleys could not furnish it. He had seen the old stage supplanted by the horse car, the horse car by the cable, and the cable by the trolley. He was looking for the next step, which he believed might come from the motor car driven either by a gasoline engine or by electricity. Such a vehicle, operating in small units with few stops, he thought promised the express service which was lacking. He was instigating a discussion of the matter in the columns of The Star at the time he became ill. The advent of the jitneys he watched from his sickroom with the greatest interest. They offered, in his opinion, a possible solution of a pressing social problem. One of the suggestions dictated by him and sent to the office a few weeks before his death was this: —

City streets thus far have been considered as belonging exclusively to the rich on which to issue stocks and bonds. Granting that only one thousand jitneys will be necessary to take care of the

business in Kansas City, what a splendid thing it will be to give independent occupation to that number of good men and good women!

The Star's activity on behalf of cheaper and better lighting for Kansas City constitutes a notable chapter in its history. At a time when other cities were getting gas at a dollar for a thousand cubic feet, Kansas City was paying $1.60. The gas company saw its danger, for it had a vulnerable franchise, and attempted to forestall it. A thirty-year grant for gas at $1.40 was secretly prepared and preparations were made to rush it through the council without debate. Word of the proposed plan was brought to The Star office. Mr. Nelson attacked it with characteristic energy.

Flaring headlines denounced the "Franchise Grab," and the news columns pointed out the secret methods that had been used to insure putting over the franchise. Editorially The Star declared for "a proper share of the profits of the business for the city," and "opportunity for the city's purchase of the entire plant within a reasonable period, and upon terms and conditions that are just and equitable to the city." The city, it was urged, was "practically a partner in the enter-

prise." That was in 1894, long before the social view of franchises was prevalent, and while business interests universally regarded them as essentially get-rich-quick schemes. The Star's publicity defeated the proposed grab, and dollar gas was the immediate result.

Within a few years, however, the gas company was failing to live up to its contract with the city in the distribution of natural gas, for which it had obtained a franchise. The Star began a vigorous campaign to compel it to fulfill its obligations. The company's chief counsel called on Mr. Nelson to protest. "But surely, colonel," he urged, "you want to be fair to the company." "Fair to the company!" Mr. Nelson exploded. "By gad, that's just what I don't want to be. When has the company been fair to the city?"

CHAPTER VII

IN THE SERVICE OF THE CITY

Mr. Nelson was always devising plans for city improvements. Very few persons ever knew the number of civic movements which originated in his creative imagination, but which were credited to other men.

He would go to his office in the morning and take from his pocket a paper upon which he had jotted down some idea as it had occurred to him, and say: "Now, who can we find who would be interested in pushing this sort of thing?" It was always his idea to let somebody else get the credit, rather than to take it for The Star.

"The Star," he would say, "is getting on very well as it is. We don't have to have an incentive to stand for Kansas City. But we want always to be on the lookout to get as many different persons as we can enlisted in the service of the town. There is no better way to get them interested than to set them at work."

It was in this way he gave momentum to the

movement which gave free public baths to Kansas City. In a letter to Mrs. Nelson, shortly after Mr. Nelson's death, Mr. U. S. Epperson, of Kansas City, told how the movement originated. He had become acquainted with Mr. Nelson while crossing the ocean in 1895, and they had talked of the fact that Kansas City had no public baths such as other cities had. Four years later, after further discussion of the matter, he initiated the public bath movement with this letter to Mr. Epperson: —

I think that Kansas City needs a public bath-house, wherein whosoever will may swim and scrub and enjoy himself without cost. Summer will be here soon and the bathing place should be ready when it comes.

It has occurred to me that a great ball in Convention Hall would realize enough money to build and equip such a place, and with this thought in mind I propose that if you will undertake the work of organizing and directing such a ball I, for my share, will stand the cost of the hall rental, the music, the decorations, the printing and all other expenses incidental to giving it, so that every dollar paid for dancing or admission tickets shall go into the building.

I would suggest April 2, Easter Monday, as a good time for the ball, but I have no stipulations

to make except that the price of ball tickets shall not exceed one dollar for each dancer.

I may say that Messrs. Van Brunt & Howe have prepared preliminary drawings, sketches and estimates, showing the feasibility of the project.

How the project was carried out Mr. Epperson told as follows:—

I was more than glad to head the undertaking, and in order to make the evening attractive to those who did not dance, it was decided to precede the ball with a minstrel show. The Star's powerful backing brought to the aid of the project the personal help of a great many leading citizens who contributed much time to its success, and three hundred and twenty-five young men volunteered to do their best toward providing the interesting program. Neither the committeemen nor the performers asked or received any compensation. Only the professional musicians forming the orchestra were paid. The night's receipts were between twelve and thirteen thousand dollars. The expenses paid by Mr. Nelson were more than twenty-two hundred dollars. This amount, with some additional money, brought into existence Kansas City's first public bath, located on park ground fronting the Paseo. The way the people flocked to that pool was a convincing argument for others, and we all know how generously we are now provided with those beautiful and useful free bathing places in

practically every quarter of the city. To raise the fund for the first bath The Star devoted pages of display advertising and unlimited space in its reading columns as well.

This one initiative on the part of Mr. Nelson is not only responsible for our public bath system, but it was such an inspiration to the young men who formed the minstrel show that other performances were given later, generally from one to two a year, until a total of ten had been given. The gross receipts were more than eighty thousand dollars, from which were paid the expenses of the shows which followed the first. The money was used partly for the Convention Hall (which, incidentally, Mr. Nelson also fathered and twice pushed to success, the first hall having burned), at that time not entirely completed and in debt; and partly to help the Priests of Pallas Association in providing our fall festivities, the last of the fund having been turned over to the park board for baths in Penn Valley Park. Each of these performances had The Star's support in free advertising in its columns. I mention this one initiative and accomplishment, with its far-reaching results, as characteristic of the many, many projects for the benefit of this city which have been born of the same mind and carried on to fulfillment by the same power.

In 1893 The Star began the agitation for an auditorium in Kansas City somewhat after the idea

of Madison Square Garden in New York, a place that should be suitable for large public gatherings, expositions, concerts, conventions, educational congresses and entertainments of all kinds; a sort of central rallying place for the whole city, and the Southwest as well.

There was no such place in Kansas City, no hall large enough to hold a great gathering of people, and the progress of the city was hampered from lack of it.

The campaign for this auditorium continued for five years. When public sentiment was ripe Mr. Nelson called a public meeting at which twenty-one thousand dollars was pledged to the building fund. Then followed a series of concerts and other entertainments, all fathered by The Star, and when two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars had been obtained, Convention Hall was built. On Washington's Birthday, 1899, Bandmaster Sousa raised his baton and the first concert was given, to the largest audience ever gathered in the Southwest.

Within a year this great hall burned to the ground, and The Star helped in another campaign which rebuilt the hall within three months, in

time for the holding in it of the first national political convention ever held in Kansas City. This was the Democratic Convention of July, 1900, in which William Jennings Bryan was nominated for the Presidency. The second hall was fireproof.

The necessity for traffic ways appealed to the practical instinct of the former contractor, and he began a series of campaigns for ways for heavier traffic, and for viaducts spanning the West Bottoms and uniting the two Kansas Citys by highways of easy grade. No one not associated with him in the devising and working out of all these projects could have even an idea of the immense amount of planning and labor on his part that those achievements required, and the tremendous amount of argument, in print and picture, that was given in The Star before the plans were realized.

As an illustration of this: After the site of the new Union Station had been selected, he planned the Twenty-third Street Traffic Way to give Kansas City, Kansas, a direct route, of easy grade, to it. He assigned a man to work up public sentiment in its favor.

"It will take ten years, perhaps, to get it," he said, "but it must come. Now is the time to begin."

When the reporter began work on this traffic way it was impossible to get anyone in Kansas City, Kansas, to admit its feasibility. The city officers would not discuss it above a whisper. They refused to be quoted on the subject further than to say: "Yes, it would be a grand thing, if we could get it." When its construction was finally begun six years later it followed almost exactly the route outlined by Mr. Nelson in The Star.

In 1907 Kansas City, Kansas, was having trouble over its water situation. Mr. Nelson called a comparatively new reporter to his desk.

"We ought to help Kansas City, Kansas," he said. "It is as much a part of Kansas City as the Kansas City in Missouri. The Star is under obligations to do everything in its power to help the people in that part of the city. Now, I am going to give you a general assignment that will not be for a day or for a week or a month. It will be a permanent assignment that will last as long as you are on The Star.

"Help Kansas City, Kansas, with all the power of this paper, always remembering that this paper is attorney for the men and women who pay it ten cents a week. Whatever is best for them this paper is for.

"Just now," Mr. Nelson continued, "the people over in Kansas City, Kansas, need help to get good water. I want you to go to Kansas City, Kansas, to-day and to-morrow and every day that is necessary until you find out what is the shortest and most feasible way to get good water for that side and let us then help them in that way."

And then he said the thing he was so fond of saying to every man who came to work on The Star:—

"Remember this: The Star has a greater purpose in life than merely to print the news. It believes in doing things. I can employ plenty of men merely to write for the paper. The successful reporter is the one who knows how to get results by working to bring about the thing he is trying to do."

Many times the young man was discouraged. The results came so slowly that at times it appeared that he was accomplishing nothing. But then he would talk over the situation with his chief, only to have his difficulties laughed at as mere incidents of any good fight, and to receive encouragement that sent him out on the task the next day with renewed determination and with renewed faith in the outcome of his work.

The fight was made through the city council, through the state legislature, through the courts, and finally through an election for the purchase of the water works by the city.

In this fight another revelation was given to the young reporter. When Mr. Nelson gave him the assignment he said: "Personally, I am not so strong for municipal ownership under our present system of political rule. See if there is not some other solution to the problem than municipal ownership."

When the reporter reached the conclusion that there was no other solution Mr. Nelson agreed. "I want you to know this," he said. "The Star is the only paper in the world, I suppose, without a 'fixed policy.' It is always for the thing that is most efficient and most feasible. What it advocated yesterday, it feels at perfect liberty to 'kick over' to-day if it finds that what it advocated yesterday stands in the way of what it finds is a good thing to-day."

The Star went into the campaign for municipal ownership, and the results were so satisfactory that the paper became an advocate of the widest latitude in the exercise of municipal ownership.

To many other tasks for the betterment and upbuilding of Kansas City he brought the same initiative and energy — to protection from floods in the Missouri and Kaw Rivers, to the lessening of the smoke nuisance and the installation of smoke consumers, to the abolition of railway grade crossings, to the suppression of unnecessary noises, to the annual clean-up of the city, to the improving of alleys and the regeneration of unsightly back yards, to encouragement of the love of birds, to the planting of trees and the suppression of insect pests, to water for rural Jackson County, to the setting out of shrubs, to the bettering of public school conditions, to anything that promised to make the city more attractive.

To backyard vegetable gardens and the planting of vacant lots he gave much attention. One year he arranged with expert market gardeners to report the results of work on a trial acre, to show the people the profits that might come from intensive cultivation of even a small tract of ground. The results were not only printed in The Star from time to time, but were published in a pamphlet that was freely distributed.

The agricultural development of the territory

tributary to Kansas City was his especial concern, and he would send a reporter any distance to learn and tell how one man had succeeded better than his neighbor in growing corn, or how the apple yield had been increased by pruning or spraying, or how a man had grown better lettuce or peaches or strawberries. When a farmer's wife in Western Kansas was awarded first prize in a butter-making contest, he sent a man there to get her story of how she did it. He sent a man to the dairy districts of the North to get information valuable to the farmers of the Southwest. When it was announced that a man in Wisconsin was doing a successful dairying business with forty cows on forty acres, "a cow to the acre," he sent a reporter there for full information about that. Through the columns of the weekly edition of The Star he interested the farm boys of the country in corn-growing contests for prizes offered by him.

There were times when he was obliged to go away for reasons of health, and they were the least happy times of his life. He never was able on these occasions to get away from his work, and always kept in as close touch with The Star by the telegraph wire as he would have been if seated at his

desk. Wherever he went and whatever he saw, the value of his experience or the information he acquired was measured by its use to him in his work of building up Kansas City. Fine roads, pleasing architecture, trees, gardens, public improvements, all whipped his imagination. In his view nothing was too good for Kansas City, nothing too big for Kansas City.

"I never come back to Kansas City," he once said, "that I do not find the sun shining as it never shines in the places where I have been."

CHAPTER VIII

HIS LOYALTY TO THE COMMON WELFARE

"The Star," Mr. Nelson used to say, "is published for the people who pay it ten cents a week. It is their newspaper. It must be their champion in everything." One of his favorite stories was of a stenographer employed by an acquaintance. Shortly before the street railway franchise election of 1909 the employer asked the young woman how her husband was going to vote. "Against the franchise," she replied. "Can't you persuade him to vote for the franchise?" the employer said. "You know we think it is a good thing, and I 'm sure he has n't studied it and does n't know much about it." "He has n't studied it," she answered, "but you know we depend on The Star. When the water is bad it says so, and it gets us good water. When the gas is poor it goes after the gas company. And when it says the franchise is a bad thing, my husband is going to follow its advice and vote against it."

Countless instances might be told of Mr. Nelson's instinctive and reasoned democracy and sense of

fair play. The Workmen's Compensation Bill was in the Missouri Legislature. Wealthy and powerful men sought to stop his vigorous fight for it. They said they would be "ruined." "I am never afraid that the men on top of the mine cannot take care of themselves," he said. "My concern is for the men at the bottom of the mine, digging the coal."

His campaigns against many schemes formed to defraud the people of Kansas City and the Southwest illustrate his passion for honesty. His fights against the fraudulent home coöperative companies, lotteries, policy games, loan sharks, fee-grabbers, "snitch" lawyers, and quack doctors can only be touched upon in the limited space of this book.

When he founded The Star in 1880 there were many gambling-houses in Kansas City, and as the city grew they increased and many new devices for fleecing the public were put in operation.

One of the worst of these was a lottery fraud, which operated under several different names in several different offices, all owned and managed by a man without scruples of conscience. These lotteries pretended to pay prizes each month to lucky holders of winning tickets, but, in fact, no prizes

were ever paid. The thing was a fraud, pure and simple, and a fraud of the meanest kind, because it robbed the poor and the ignorant.

The Star, day after day, exposed the fraud, warned the public against it and urged the authorities to stamp it out of existence. The man who operated this swindle had accumulated a fortune, and he fought back and managed to continue for a while, but at last he was driven out of the city and his swindle came to an end.

Another man in Kansas City had built up a profitable income by swindling the poor with a system of gambling called "policy." This appealed especially to the poor, and to school children, because a dime invested promised returns many fold. The owner of this swindle had branches in all parts of the city, and many of them were close to the public schools, where pupils were enticed in to invest their nickels and dimes. He was a political boss, well intrenched, and it took a bitter fight on the part of The Star to rout him.

In 1901 twenty thousand persons in and around Kansas City had been lured into different "home coöperative" lottery frauds, on the promise that they had a chance to "draw" a house and lot by

the investment of only a few dollars. There were thirty of those companies in Kansas City, and some of them were headed by men of prominence in the community.

Having learned that they were fraudulent in their nature, Mr. Nelson attacked them in The Star and carried the fight up to the Postmaster-General in Washington, who issued a fraud order against the companies operating the swindle, and thus put them out of business. The owners of one of the companies sued Mr. Nelson for a half-million dollars, alleging that he had ruined their "business." They lost their suit.

Libel suits he regarded as part of the day's work. Their number was an index to him that The Star was doing its duty. If he felt that The Star had accidentally or mistakenly done some one an injury, he was eager to make reparation. He never knowingly allowed a suit against the paper to come to trial if he felt there was merit in the action. But the suits brought by politicians and by enemies of the public he welcomed.

A number of loan sharks in Kansas City were amassing wealth by exacting usurious rates of interest from the unfortunate. They would lend a

working man or woman a sum of money, taking an assignment of wages as security, and charging ten per cent a month interest. Those loan sharks had a business partnership with certain dishonest justice courts whereby they forced their victims to keep up the payment of the interest even for years after the aggregate amount of interest paid exceeded the principal originally borrowed. The Star attacked and drove the loan sharks out of business.

In the same way it brought to an end the combinations of "fee-grabbers," by which officers and judges of courts caused wholesale arrests in order to collect fees.

The Star carried on a war against the medical quacks who infested Kansas City, advertising widely to cure any disease. The saloon and the liquor traffic Mr. Nelson fought consistently throughout his career. September 10, 1881, appeared the following editorial in his paper: "What a vast change would be effected in the morals of the community if the saloons were closed on Sunday! The day now is one of general license, and the result of the wholesale consumption of liquor on Sunday is appalling."

As he grew older his dislike for the liquor business increased. He became convinced that it was one of the country's great evils. The participation of the liquor interests in politics further incensed him. He found good government constantly menaced by their opposition. So, in 1905, he decided to accept no more liquor advertisements. The sudden cutting-off of so large a source of revenue was a rather serious matter from a business standpoint, and the suggestion was made to him that it might be well to cut out the whisky advertisements, but to let the beer advertisements continue for a time in order to give an opportunity to get additional business to take their place. "I guess we're making money enough without them," was his only comment.

As a result of his experience in politics and business he was impressed with the necessity of two reforms whose importance had not been widely noticed. He felt that to permit the legitimate expenses of elections to be borne by private persons gave the power to big interests — public service corporations, saloons, protected industries and the like — to control the Government through their financing of elections. As to the courts, he became

convinced that so long as lawyers were privately paid, legal proceedings would be merely trials of skill, with the advantage on the side of money. So he desired that the Government pay all election expenses and that it employ the lawyers and make them paid officers of the court, just as the judge is. He set forth his views on both these questions at length in a letter to his friend, Theodore Roosevelt, in 1912. He wrote: —

As to general policies of government I have two hobbies. My scheme is to drive the money out of the voting-booth and out of the court-house. The Government must bear the entire expense of all elections, and justice must be really — and not merely nominally — free.

If our form of government is to remain stable, justice must not be virtually for sale as it is today. One of the places where the poor man and the rich man should go arm in arm is the court-house.

But of course they don't. Aside from the advantages which the rich man has in our cumbersome judicial system, and in the personnel of the judges, he has the immense advantage of the ability to hire the best lawyers. The first threat that the rich man makes to the poor man is that he will get the best lawyers in town. Under such conditions it is absurd to talk of the courts meting out justice.

Lawyers are now regarded as officers of the court. They ought to be paid officers. Their salary should come from the Government, not from private litigants. The State provides the judge and jury. It ought also to provide the lawyers. Society would never dream of permitting one of the litigants to pay the judge. It ought not to permit him to pay another officer of the court — the lawyer.

The private fee system promotes all sorts of incidental evils. It encourages lawyers to make legislation complicated and uncertain. It prevents reform of judicial procedure. It incites the stirring-up of litigation. When a suit without the shadow of merit may be begun by merely the payment of a small fee, the lawyer is under constant incentive to instigate legal proceedings. I have known of repeated incidents of suits threatened against doctors and others that were the most evident blackmail. Under the existing system a man's reputation is at the mercy of any blackleg who cares to threaten it. A young doctor might easily be ruined by a suit charging malpractice, though there might be no foundation to it. A woman's reputation might be blasted by the mention of her name in a divorce proceeding as a co-respondent. Her only recourse would be a lawsuit, which would simply augment the injustice.

A situation has been produced by which it is impossible to carry out any business transaction

whatever without the help of a lawyer. When a man dies his estate is regarded as the legitimate prey for attorneys. It may be looted with impunity. In England the Government has established a bureau to take charge of estates so that the man of small means may have the assurance of knowing that his widow's property will be safeguarded. In this country we divide it among the lawyers. The fee system absolutely bars the doing of justice between the rich and the poor.

Both of these are great big questions and I have only touched the fringes of them. I cannot hope that either of them will be dealt with adequately in my lifetime, or perhaps in the lifetime of the next generation. But I want to leave them as a heritage for The Star to deal with after I am gone. It is my desire that The Star shall keep hammering on them until equality between rich and poor in the selection of officials and in the administration of justice shall no longer be a sham.

CHAPTER IX

AS A BUILDER

"THE real thing," was a favorite phrase of Mr. Nelson's. If there was any unusually good piece of work done on the paper his praise was, "Now, that 's the real thing." If a man had come forward in some crisis he would exclaim admiringly, "He 's the real thing."

It was an index of his character. He could not bear anything that was unsubstantial or shoddy in any department of human activity. This feeling was particularly evident in his extensive building operations.

All his life Mr. Nelson was a builder. He built scores of houses, and he once remarked that he supposed that every year for fifty years he must have built at least two miles of rock road.

"Building houses," he once said, "is the greatest fun in the world."

Architecture was one of his hobbies. He designed his home and virtually designed The Star office itself. So he was intensely interested in every

form of building and was thoroughly informed on the subject. Somebody once asked him about the lasting qualities of frame houses.

"I should be unhappy," he replied, "if I thought the frame houses I have built will not be as good fifty years from now as they are to-day."

The smallest house he built was built as substantially as the largest. The customary practice, for instance, in building houses of moderate size is to use two-by-fours as uprights. Mr. Nelson always used two-by-sixes because they were more substantial. The chimneys he built were set in Portland cement. His carpenters were instructed to use about twice the number of nails ordinarily used in building.

Everything that he did was done in the same way. As he often said, he simply could n't do anything else.

He took a deep interest in the building of the homes of the city. He had a strong personal pride in the fact that Kansas City was known as a "city of beautiful homes." It pleased him mightily when some visitor from another city would speak admiringly of the charming parks and drives and homes of Kansas City.

In his paper he encouraged in all ways the building of fine comfortable homes and their adornment.

His interest in this is shown by the fact that when a tornado swept through the city of Omaha, demolishing many frame houses, he made use of the incident to demonstrate a theory of his that any house that was properly built would withstand the force of a tornado. He sent his own builder to Omaha and found this to be true. The houses broken by the winds were poorly built. Even frame houses that were properly strengthened by timbers withstood the storm, and he advocated, in an extended campaign, the proper strengthening of all houses thereafter built in Kansas City, so that no wind might blow them down.

He took particular delight in the Georgian architecture of New England. During his summer exiles in Magnolia he spent much time in driving about the country observing the fine old houses.

"I never would build a house," he said, "unless I had authority for it at least a century old. You never can tell whether some new style is good. But if a house has stood a century and still is good, you can be pretty sure of it."

He got his inspiration for The Star Building at Eighteenth and Grand Avenue from the McLean home in Washington. Taking an early morning walk with a member of the staff he stopped and looked over the tapestry brick home, in the style of the Italian Renaissance.

"That's what we want for our new building," he said. The idea never left his mind. Jarvis Hunt, of Chicago, was the architect to whom he intrusted the designing of the building. Mr. Hunt came to Kansas City a few months later with a magnificent water-color painting of a palatial building in marble. He set it up in The Star office, where it was being generally admired when Mr. Nelson came in.

"What do you think of it?" was the general inquiry.

"Oh, it's a beautiful building, of course," he replied. "But it wouldn't do for a print shop. You couldn't imagine a printer's devil all covered with ink coming running out of a marble palace."

"Kick a hole through it," exclaimed Hunt, throwing up his hands. "Kick a hole through it! Back to Chicago for me!"

The adaptation of the McLean home was then

Oak Hall

worked out by Mr. Hunt under Mr. Nelson's supervision.

Mr. Nelson's home was at Oak Hall, which stands within grounds some thirty acres in extent on the summit and slope of a hill overlooking Brush Creek Valley, in the southern part of the city. By addition and revision, each detail of which was planned and directed by Mr. Nelson himself, the house grew from its first dimensions in 1887 to its present size, notable for its architectural distinction, its home-like appearance and its admirable suitability to its situation. When the site was selected, it lay two miles beyond the southern city limits, in a quarter that had been entirely neglected as a residence district, reached for the most part along unbroken roads, the most direct route to it leading through farmers' fields and an old orchard.

At that time it was generally believed that it would be many years before the city would reach that far south. But long before his death the city was built up far beyond it to the south, and homes, among the finest in the city, were in its neighborhood. The last extension of the city's limits placed the municipal boundary as far south of Oak Hall

as Oak Hall was south of the limits when Mr. Nelson chose his home-site.

Oak Hall was built of limestone found everywhere in and around Kansas City. It is a stone peculiarly adapted in color to the surroundings of Kansas City. When he decided to build of that stone, builders told him that it would not do; it would crumble; and besides no one had ever built with it. But he saw its inherent beauty and adaptability for fitting into the color scheme of field and foliage, and he chose it for his building material.

The result was so successful that it became an example to Kansas City that was widely followed.

"The great danger in building large houses," he used to say, "is that they look like a palace or like a public institution. I have tried to build mine like a home."

In 1907 Mr. Nelson completed a summer residence on the seashore at Magnolia, Massachusetts, where he had spent several summers previously. There he and his family went to live during the hot season in Kansas City. His treatment of this house was characteristic. The site had been rejected by other possible purchasers because it was low and

swampy. These very qualities appealed to him. He saw the picturesque possibilities of the place and designed a colonial dwelling standing several feet below the street level. Its long, sweeping roof lines harmonized with the slope of the ground and made possible a wonderfully attractive garden front looking out over the ocean.

His building instinct showed again when he determined to build a yacht. The conventional pleasure yachts did not interest him. He came to the conclusion that the Gloucester fishermen must have developed the most practical and comfortable type of vessel. So to the horror of his fellow-members of the Eastern Yacht Club he committed the construction of his schooner to a Gloucester builder of fishermen. Certain modifications he planned in the interest of comfort and space. The Gloucester builders shied at these modifications, which were contrary to their traditions, so the yacht's owner brought on a carpenter from Kansas City who constructed the innovational part of the boat. The yacht was named the Hoosier, with Gloucester as its home port, and the marine writers called the Hoosier of Gloucester "the glorified fisherman."

The judgment of Mr. Nelson as a yacht de-

signer was fully justified when the Hoosier on its first cruise with the Eastern Yacht Club won the cup with some of the fastest sailing yachts of the Atlantic Coast as contestants. After that, all up and down Cape Ann he was known as the owner of the Hoosier. The Kansas City Star did not exist for the fisher folk. But they knew all about the yacht designed on the lines of a Gloucester fisherman.

In 1902 he built in the East Bottoms a paper mill of capacity to make all the white paper used in issuing The Daily and Weekly Star. A year earlier the paper trust had taken advantage of the fact that The Star's unforeseen growth in size and circulation had made necessary the purchase of considerably more paper than had been contracted for as the year's supply. The trust raised the price on the added quantity, and with no gentle hand. On the day notice of the increased price reached the office of The Star, and was relayed to Mr. Nelson, who was taking a vacation, he wired: "We must have our own paper mill."

He did build his own paper mill, and made his own paper until the condition of the market for ground wood pulp, of which paper is manufactured, would have necessitated the building of his

The Cottage at Magnolia, Mass.
showing treatment of a forbidding building site

own pulp mill in Canada. This he declined to do, owing to advancing age and the added burdens which that venture would have put upon him.

His father had been one of the first Western importers of Shorthorn cattle. In the late '90s Mr. Nelson bought a farm south of his home and began building up a herd of Shorthorns. It was a matter of great pride with him that one of the bulls bred on his farm, King Edward VII, was junior champion of Shorthorns at the St. Louis World's Fair.

This farm he disposed of when he undertook the development of The Star's morning edition. But he returned to his farm love three years before his death, when he purchased the Sni-a-Bar farms near Grain Valley, about thirty miles from Kansas City. He took the greatest delight in the building of barns and sheds and in the remodeling of the farmhouse that stood on the place.

This he made a real farmhouse — a low, rambling, one-story building surrounded by a white picket fence.

The farms were devoted to stock-raising, and he began once more with his old enthusiasm to build up a new herd of beef cattle. He had long

held the theory that superior animals could be produced by mating choice, pure-bred Shorthorn bulls with the best of native cows. In England five pure-bred crosses entitle the product of the last breeding to registry by the Shorthorn Association. In America the pedigree must trace back to an imported cow. He bought the best cows he could secure at the Kansas City Stock Yards and put his theory into practice, believing that, with careful culling of the inferior cows produced from them and their progeny, he could in five generations produce animals that would rank up with, if not surpass, as beef producers the registered Shorthorn. He always used white bulls, for he had fond boyhood recollections of a prize white Shorthorn steer which his father raised and fed. On his seventeen hundred and fifty acres at Grain Valley were more than five hundred cattle.

These farms and their equipment he gave to the people, to be used for their benefit after his death.

CHAPTER X

AS A LOVER OF HUMANITY

The Board of Public Welfare once had an ordinance drawn to revise the building regulations of Kansas City and to compel landlords to let light and air into windowless rooms. Its defeat in the Council angered Mr. Nelson, and he called over a reporter.

"I want you," he said, "to go out and burn down those rotten tenements. That is your assignment. Don't let up until it's done."

That was the sort of crusade Mr. Nelson took the greatest delight in. It was rare that The Star did not have something of the sort on hand. In the winter of 1898, just before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, The Star sent a reporter to Cuba to investigate the reports of starvation among the non-combatants there. He found in the city of Matanzas "starvation an actual, hideous fact." He reported that "ten thousand men, women, and children were suffering in nakedness and in the constant presence of death, the

misery of hunger," and that fifty persons a day actually were starving to death.

The Star at once made an appeal for relief. A building in Kansas City was rented for receipt of supplies. President McKinley warmly commended The Star's "Cuban Starvation Relief" plan and promised that the Government would help furnish a ship to carry the supplies to Cuba. The Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railway offered to transport the supplies from Kansas City to New Orleans. Eight days after the announcement in The Star of the plan of relief a train of twenty-one cars, loaded with five hundred tons of food and clothing, started from Kansas City, and other cars followed a few days later. The steamer Utstein was chartered, and it carried eight hundred tons of supplies and twelve thousand dollars in cash to the starving people of Matanzas.

Several years later a man, then wealthy and prominent in Cuba, called at the office of The Star to thank Mr. Nelson for that relief. It had saved the lives of his mother and sisters.

The unfortunate poor and the maniacs of Kansas City and Jackson County were herded together in a ramshackle old poorhouse, which was filthy,

insanitary, and uncomfortable beyond description. Men and women with minds unbalanced were chained to walls reeking with dampness and slime.

In his youth Mr. Nelson had seen an aged man reduced from prosperity to poverty and want, and had seen that man apply for admission to the poorhouse.

"I paid taxes all my life to help support that poorhouse; why should n't I end my days there?" the man said, with dignity.

The incident made a deep impression upon Mr. Nelson, and, when, early in his editorship of The Star, he discovered the conditions in the Jackson County Poorhouse, he began a campaign to correct them. It was his theory that the insane should go to the state hospitals provided for them, where they would be properly cared for, and that the poorhouse should be a place where old folks would be comfortable and kindly treated in every way, and he preached that insistently. It would seem, in this day, that it would be necessary only to point out the conditions and they would be remedied, but that was not the case. The reform was bitterly opposed, and it was years before the insane of Jackson county were sent to the state hospitals, and before a new,

commodious, sanitary, and comfortable "County Home" was built for the poor, as a result of The Star's campaign.

Then The Star extended its plea for reform in poor-farm conditions to the entire States of Missouri and Kansas, with gratifying results.

In 1886, six years after the founding of The Star, Mr. Nelson originated "The Santa Claus Fund," and that year the fund amounted to $935.95. With this two thousand toys and two thousand packets of candy were bought, and, while Santa Claus's back was momentarily turned, two hundred and fifty pairs of shoes were added by The Star's owner. The city circulation staff of The Star had sought out the children most deserving of the gifts and prepared lists of them so that the distribution of them early Christmas morning was quickly and accurately accomplished. The plan finally had to be abandoned because in a few years it had grown to such an extent that it became impossible to make the distribution through The Star.

Later the same idea was applied in the "Good Fellow" movement, through which generous-hearted people were brought into contact with needy families at Christmas-time.

Under his direction The Star was constantly the greatest asset of every organization that desired to raise funds for public purposes. The Y.M.C.A., Swope Settlement, the Boys' Hotel, the Provident Association received notable help from his newspaper. Indeed, it came to be a recognized preliminary of every important money-raising campaign in Kansas City to enlist first the support of The Star. Without its support there was a feeling that nothing could be done. The raising of fifty thousand dollars as Kansas City's contribution to the Red Cross was one of the last enterprises of this sort to engage his attention. He was especially concerned in it, because his daughter was at the head of the local Red Cross organization. His interest made it possible for Kansas City to far outstrip every other city in the amount raised in proportion to population.

His private benefactions were extensive. They reached out to include the care of his mother's old household servants, a school teacher of his youth, and any number of others who appealed in various ways to his sympathies. In his last years, when he felt obliged to turn his charities over to others to administer, he reserved the privilege of personally

meeting the sisters of the various Catholic orders who made regular visits to solicit funds. The vast organization of the Catholic Church appealed powerfully to his imagination, and the fact that he had seen Sisters of Charity in every part of the world gave him an especial interest in their work.

Among those, not on the regular staff, who wrote occasionally for The Star at space rates, was a woman in Kansas City, Kansas, whose first name is Mary and whose last name is not material. A check in payment for her work at the end of the month was sent to her, but it went astray in the mail and turned up at the home of another woman of the same name, but of very poor circumstances. At this Mary's home a big family of children was hungry and the rent was not paid. She cashed the check and spent it for the family's wants.

In due course of time the missing money was learned about and the police were asked to investigate. Soon thereafter two policemen appeared at the office with the erring Mary.

"This is the woman who stole the money," one of the officers said.

"What was the trouble, Mary?" Mr. Nelson asked.

"I always heard you were a kind and charitable man, Mr. Nelson," she said. "I thought you knew the rent was not paid and the children were hungry and I thought you meant the money for me. The check was made out in my name."

"Well, I did mean the money for you," Mr. Nelson said, grasping the situation quickly. "How are the children to-day, Mary?"

CHAPTER XI

IN THE NATIONAL FIELD

UNDER Mr. Nelson's editorship The Star was an intensely local publication. It assumed that its readers were more interested in an automobile accident on Grand Avenue than in a change in the French Cabinet. But it was inevitable that a man of his instinct for affairs should make his influence felt in the national field.

At the time of his death Mark Sullivan, editor of Collier's, wrote: —

Mr. Nelson was much more than merely a great newspaper man. He was one of the dozen important personalities of his time in America. The liberal and progressive movement which arose in the Middle West between ten and twenty years ago and came to dominate the political and social forces of the period centered largely around The Kansas City Star and the other forces of public opinion which took their leadership from The Star.

How he came first to take a hand in national affairs already has been told. His service as Indiana

manager for Tilden was his initiation. The failure of the Democratic Party to renominate Tilden in 1880 convinced him that there was no more sincerity in the Democratic than in the Republican organization. His feeling was expressed in The Star regarding the nomination of Grover Cleveland in 1884. That nomination, he said, "was the first evidence of moral courage on the part of the Democratic leaders since the convention of 1876." The editorial continued: —

The opposition to the nomination of Cleveland by the Tammanyites and plug-uglies of his own State, instead of intimidating the ordinarily cowardly Democrats, greatly to the surprise of many who had no confidence in the courage or honesty of the Democratic Party, seemed to stimulate the convention to a realization of its duty, and the great reformer who had the nerve and backbone, in the discharge of his official duty as Governor of New York, to antagonize the most powerful organization within the Democratic Party, was made the candidate. Cleveland, because of his independent and courageous course as Governor of New York, has won the confidence of independent, thoughtful Republicans as well as the better class of men within his own party, and he will start in the campaign with the belief in the minds of most persons that his election is assured.

From that time on he was a devoted supporter of Cleveland. The new President's espousal of the cause of tariff reform was additional reason for his enthusiasm.

In The Star's earlier years the country, and particularly the West, was not familiar with the idea of a non-partisan newspaper. It was assumed that a newspaper must be a party organ, and the independent paper was under suspicion. The Star gave its readers a frightful jolt when in 1892 it supported Cleveland for President, and a Republican, Major William Warner, for Governor. Twelve years later it repeated, by supporting Roosevelt for President and Joseph W. Folk, Democrat, for Governor. The same year it supported the Republican candidate for Governor of Kansas. But finding his record disappointing it made a vigorous campaign for the Democratic candidate in 1906. The Democratic Party in Kansas was not in good standing at that time. It had been identified with the movement to repeal the prohibition amendment. But it had nominated a man of fine character, Senator W. A. Harris. He was not elected. But the majority of the Republican nominee was cut from seventy thousand to two thousand.

In the free silver campaign and the campaign of 1900 on the "paramount issue" of "imperialism," The Star mildly favored the Republican ticket. But Mr. Nelson's distrust of what he regarded as the party of special privilege was so great that he could not give enthusiastic support.

The campaign of 1900 happened by a chance of travel to bring him into personal contact with a man whose qualities and ideals were strikingly like his own and to whose cause he was devoted for the rest of his life. Theodore Roosevelt had first attracted his attention particularly as a fighting civil service commissioner. A fighter was a man after his own heart, and he watched the career of the young New Yorker with growing interest. In 1898, when Roosevelt was elected Governor of New York, Mr. Nelson was intensely concerned in the campaign. Shortly before the election he was lunching with friends at the Lawyers' Club in New York City. One of the notables at the table expressed the opinion that Judge Van Wyck, Roosevelt's opponent, would have a walkover. "Why do you think so?" Mr. Nelson inquired. "Oh," said his friend, with a sweeping gesture over the noble assemblage of millionaires present, "all these

people are for him." "Indeed," said Mr. Nelson, standing up to look over the crowd, "and how many of 'these people' are there?"

Personal acquaintance with Roosevelt ripened into a warm friendship. When he gave his friendship he gave it without reserve. For argument's sake he might admit that his friend was fallible. But he never found fault. "When you've got a big, courageous man going your way," he would say, "don't be critical." "When I'm for a man I'm *fur* him," was a favorite expression.

Later he was charmed by the personality of President Roosevelt's Secretary of War. The Star became the leader of the Taft forces in the Southwest as the canvass for the nomination approached, and its efforts largely insured the Missouri and Kansas delegations for Taft. When the special session was convoked to revise the tariff, Mr. Nelson looked forward to the consummation of his long-deferred hopes for tariff revision. The outcome was a bitter disappointment. But it was not until the Winona speech that he became convinced that the President's position was such that he could no longer support him.

With others he hoped a new progressive lead-

ership would come up within the Republican Party. But as time went on he felt increasingly that there was only one man who could unite the progressive forces. He had kept in close touch with Colonel Roosevelt. He was one of the men to whom the colonel had written from the Upper Nile asking for information and advice regarding the situation at home. The colonel's participation in the New York State campaign of 1910 as leader of a forlorn hope in behalf of the progressive movement had aroused his admiration. One of his editorials at this time evoked a playful remonstrance from his old friend, Henry Watterson, in the Louisville Courier-Journal. They had been closely associated in the Tilden campaign, and later had been much together in Paris. Mr. Nelson's reply, printed in The Star with the signature, "W. R. N.," gives an insight into his own attitude toward political life, as well as into his relations with his intimates. As in the case of everything that came from him, he furnished the ideas and many of the phrases. The actual composition was done in the office. Colonel Watterson's editorial ended: —

And, by the way, William, old sport, how comes it that you, an old-fashioned Democrat of the tariff-

for-revenue-only species, having repudiated Bryan, e'en accept the Bryanization of Roosevelt, with a few extra frills of centralization, piousness, and arbitrary power? As a maker of Presidents and Men-on-Horseback, dear Bill, we fear you are not a success. William, we looks toward you!

Here is the reply: —

And to'a'ds yo'self, Henry Watterson — with admiration undiluted and affection unimpaired, even by your ribald mockery. For, come to think of it, who may you be, that you should p'int a disparaging finger hitherward and speak despitefully of President-making? Were not you and I involved together in the inspiring game of planning presidencies for this glorious Republic, so far back yonder that maybe you 'll pretend to disremember our early adventures in that peerless sport? Did we not foregather, in '72, in brilliant conspiracy to soothe and charm the Nation with a candidate who should wear in his bosom the confidence of the worthy majorities of all parties and blend anew the broken bonds between the States — that great enterprise, high of motive and hard of luck, that got into the wrong and lonesome pew with H. G. — may the good soul of him rest in peace! Did not we — you and I, Henry — shout together in the radiant phalanx that swept Samuel J. Tilden past the ballot boxes? And did we not brandish swords and yell in unison when we could n't get him any

further — even though you and your "hundred thousand Kentuckians" were ready and eager to ensanguinate the path ahead? Did n't we rally again and declare, with all the voice left in us, that Vindication by Renomination was the one inexorable duty of the baffled Democracy toward the outraged Nation? And did n't we sulk in our tents to beat the band when the convention turned a deaf ear to our outcry? And — since you are rash enough, O Henry of the Unjust Jibe! to speak in terms that may signify the actual *making* of Presidents as well as merely the projectin' 'round in fields where Presidents might lie dormant — did not we embrace and part in sorrow, when you lost step in the Cleveland cavalcade, and fell by the wayside, among the thorns, while I marched on, undismayed and rejoicing, through twelve years of prideful allegiance?

The march of events forced the progressives to turn to Roosevelt to head, once more, the national forward-looking forces. Mr. Nelson was one of those to whose urging the former President finally gave a reluctant consent. The circumstances leading up to the formation of the Progressive Party completed his conviction that the Republican management was hopelessly reactionary. From Chicago before the national convention convened he outlined a dispatch to The Star predicting the forma-

tion of a new party dedicated to human rights. So when the Progressive Party was organized he violated his rule and permitted his name to be signed to the call, as representative of Missouri. The Star had urged on the Democratic Party the necessity of nominating Woodrow Wilson as a progressive Democrat. It would have supported Wilson had the choice been between him and a reactionary Republican. Under the circumstances, however, the support of Roosevelt and the Progressive ticket was inevitable. The fact that there seemed no possible chance of success did not detract from the vigor of The Star's campaign. It was characteristic of Mr. Nelson that as soon as the organization of the new party was under way, he insisted on retiring from his position of temporary national committeeman. He would not suffer his newspaper's independence of action to be handicapped by his identification with any party. After the election he supported the Wilson Administration in its progressive policies just as vigorously as he had supported the Roosevelt Administration.

A word may be said regarding his feeling toward public office. He held strongly that a newspaper editor had no business ever to have anything

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Farm House, Sni-a-Bar Farms

to do with political patronage or office-holding. He was excessively annoyed when the story got about that he might be appointed ambassador to some European capital by one of the Presidents he had supported. Once, when such reports were particularly insistent, he printed an editorial recognizing them and setting forth his position. The editor of The Star, he said, was "amply sustained" by his present job, and "regarded himself as holding a place of greater responsibility and usefulness than any within the gift of the President or the electorate."

On several occasions friends appealed for his influence in gaining them political appointments. His invariable reply — usually received incredulously — was that never in his life had he asked for a political appointment for anybody; that if he were consulted he would be glad to give his opinion, but that he never had volunteered advice. This was the exact truth. Once he stretched his rule so far as to urge the retention of an efficient postmaster who was supported by all the business organizations of the town, but whose removal was demanded by dissatisfied politicians. Once or twice he sent warnings to Cabinet officers that certain

contemplated appointments were bad. And on one historic occasion he almost broke with the Roosevelt Administration because the First Assistant Postmaster-General succeeded in dismissing the postmaster at Weston, Missouri, for following The Star's advice and supporting Roosevelt for President and Folk for Governor. The postmaster wrote to The Star of the impending peril, and Mr. Nelson took up his case with the greatest vigor. But the removal had been made before his protest reached Washington.

"People have an idea," he used to say, "that I lie awake nights fixing up slates for Presidents to O. K. The fact is that the only job I ever really went after, that measly little post-office at Weston, I didn't get."

CHAPTER XII

AS A NEWSPAPER MAKER

Mr. Nelson was primarily a great editor. Everything else with him was a side issue. His life was concentrated in The Star. His success he sometimes playfully attributed to the fact that he did not go into journalism until he was nearly forty years old. This meant, of course, that he brought to his work the viewpoint of the reader rather than that of the technical newspaper man.

This outside attitude showed itself in what was, perhaps, his most spectacular journalistic innovation—the twice-a-day service which The Star began in 1901. The necessity for modern life of the morning and afternoon paper had been demonstrated. It was left for him to recognize that two papers independently edited did not meet the needs of the reader. For the morning paper was sure to carry material which had appeared in the paper of the previous afternoon, and the afternoon paper to rehash news that had appeared in the morning. As he considered the problem after his

purchase of The Times he came to the conclusion that the ideal service for the reader would be an afternoon paper with the news of the day as nearly complete as possible, to be followed by a morning bulletin sheet, which should carry only the later developments. It would be possible, he decided, for The Star to shoulder the burden of supplying this morning bulletin service to its readers free. Eventually he hoped the advertising patronage would pay for the service, and perhaps more. That was for the future to show.

A factor in his decision was the advent of the "comic supplement" in yellow journalism. He felt that the "comics" would be popular. But he detested them as inartistic and vulgar. He repeatedly said that he would shut up shop before he would publish anything of the sort. The publication of the morning edition with no increase in price appealed to him as offering a way out. It would be giving the readers of The Star something far better than the "comics," and so would tend to forestall future competition.

"When your competitor puts on a new front doorstep," he once said, "you should build a complete new front to your establishment." The new

service was one of the most daring adventures ever made in the American newspaper field. But after he had made up his mind on the merits of the plan he never was troubled with doubts as to the outcome. "Believe in the people," he would say. "No man with even ordinary judgment ever went wrong in assuming that the people will support the best that can be furnished them. Human nature is made that way."

The innovation met the situation in exactly the way he had expected. But the advertising patronage increased so that the morning edition soon developed into much more than the bulletin service he originally had in mind and became a complete newspaper.

The same attitude was shown in his establishing of The Weekly Kansas City Star. It was founded, not to make money, but to fight for tariff reform. "I took pencil and paper," he said, "and figured that we could afford to print a four-page farm weekly for twenty-five cents a year. Nobody else had ever done it. But I felt that it was possible, that we were in a position to do it, and that we ought to do it. For we had a lot to say to the farmers and we were n't reaching them through the daily."

Three important innovations in American newspaper making for which he was responsible were these: The supplying of seven papers to subscribers for ten cents a week; the twice-a-day service with thirteen papers with no increase or price; the publication of a complete farm weekly at twenty-five cents a year.

His significance in the newspaper world was recognized by publishers everywhere. In 1902–03 he was vice-president of the Associated Press, and he served on the board of directors for the nine years from 1905 to 1914, when he insisted on retiring.

But his whole attitude toward the problems of the newspaper was more revolutionary than any one thing he did. "Always keep in mind the family that is paying us ten cents a week — and particularly its women members," was his constant admonition to his associates. He felt there was constant danger of "shooting over the heads of the readers," as he was fond of expressing it. He wanted The Star to be always entertaining, always fresh and vivacious, always looked forward to with pleasure in the ordinary household. He loathed anything perfunctory. The average newspaper he

regarded as in a rut, handicapped by tradition, failing to get the viewpoint of the reader.

Mr. Nelson's methods in the conduct of The Star were as individual as everything else he did. His interest extended to the smallest details. But particularly in his later years he paid little attention to the business aspects of the newspaper. His attention was absorbed in editorial duties.

It was characteristic of him that he asked that when it was necessary to mention him in the news columns he should be referred to as "editor" of The Star, rather than as "editor and owner" — the title which was kept standing at the head of the editorial column.

He almost never wrote anything for the paper with his own hand. He was too busy for that. But the day rarely passed when he did not outline one or more articles of some sort. Almost always in these outlined articles there would be striking sentences which could be used *verbatim.* He was a master of nervous, epigrammatic English.

When an article he had outlined would be completed, he liked to have it read over to him. He had acquired a wonderful facility at criticism. He would listen to the reading of a long article and

then say: "Now, back up to about the middle of the article, where you say so-and-so." The writer would find the place and read the passage again. "Now, don't you think it could be better expressed in this way?" Mr. Nelson would say. And his substitute would almost invariably impress the author of the article as a decided improvement.

If he were away from the office for any reason he would jot down memoranda of ideas on the backs of envelopes. Later he would have them copied on sheets of paper and sent to some member of the staff for circulation. One night in his illness, for instance, he was wakeful. About midnight he called Ben, his devoted friend, nurse, and manager of the household, and dictated this paragraph. It is characteristic of him: —

"The legislature has always been looked upon by the capitalist as a place to obtain special privileges. It looks now as though the people may go there to get their rights."

One of his axioms was that under all circumstances The Star must be a gentleman. His staff knew that he would not sanction the publication of articles reflecting on the private life of any person, unless a court proceeding made it necessary.

"I am always willing to overlook an error in judgment regarding news," he would say, "provided it is made on the side of good taste."

At one time a grave scandal came up involving a man who was a possibility as a presidential candidate. There was a division of opinion in the office regarding it. Mr. Nelson, as he often put it, "cast the unanimous vote" against the publication.

"The man has been making a game fight for self-control," he said. "The Star is n't going to make his way harder for him."

He had no patience with perfunctory work of any sort, or with adherence to precedents. If news worth while was in sight he would throw all the resources of the paper into getting it. But if he felt that something else than news was of most public interest, then that was the thing that concerned him.

"I don't enjoy traveling in a well-trodden path," he would say. "The Star should pioneer."

If a poem by Rudyard Kipling or a story by S. G. Blythe was the most interesting thing that had come into the office on a day, his instructions were to "play it up" on the first page.

He had the greatest scorn for the suggestion

that some other newspaper handled material in another way. "What the other fellow does does n't interest me," he would say. "Newspapers that are edited with a view to attracting attention from other newspapers are failures. We are running The Star for our readers, not for other newspapers."

The advent of yellow journalism never disturbed him, and he made no concessions to it in the way of big headlines or sensational exaggerations. His was one of the few newspapers in America that were uninfluenced by the new movement. He believed the tendencies of the "yellows" were vulgar and bad. Over and over he declared he would quit the business before he would get out what he regarded as a shoddy paper.

His ideal of giving the reader the most possible for his money showed in all the details of his management. He felt, for instance, that the size of type commonly used in newspapers was trying on the eyes. So he discarded it and had The Star set in larger type. With the larger brevier type he used first a style of type face that he felt was artistic. After two or three years he decided that it was not quite as legible as a blacker type, so he

threw the handsome type away and ordered the other.

For a long time he would not use illustrations in The Star because he felt a newspaper could not do them well, and he never was for doing anything he could not do well. But finally he decided on the use of line drawings. Other newspapers gradually adopted the mechanical form of reproduction of photographs known as "half-tones." This process was vastly cheaper than the one The Star was using, but Mr. Nelson never would consider it, for two reasons: In the first place, the half-tone is likely to smear and blur in the rapid printing of a newspaper, and in the second place a mechanical reproduction never interested him. He wanted individuality.

When he was away for the summers he always liked to have a member of the staff with him. His impaired eyesight in his later years made it almost essential that he should have some one at hand who was familiar with newspapers and with The Star, and who could go over the paper with him and write out his suggestions — for he never had acquired the habit of dictating letters or articles.

On such occasions he sent daily letters and

telegrams to the office, making suggestions and giving hints of policies. For instance, in 1911, Champ Clark made a speech replying to a statement by the President. Mr. Nelson wired: "While Champ Clark's reply lacks dignity in spots, he scored all right."

At another time he wrote: "Our attention should be given to tax reform at home. A citizen ought to be able to pay all his county and city taxes at one time. There is too much duplication of officials and duties."

He was fond of sending such precepts as this: "In every editorial room the warning sign of the New England railroad crossings should be posted: 'Stop, Look, Listen.' A good head is a mighty fine thing, but unless guided by good conscience it can do a world of mischief in a newspaper office."

The whole make-up and appearance of The Star was evidence of his confidence that people wanted only the best. He steadfastly refused to cheapen the paper in any way. Typographically it has attracted attention all over the country. Only a few days before his death a letter came from one of the great New York publishing houses

making inquiry about The Star's experience with one style of type which it had used several years before and then had abandoned.

"Of course our readers can't be expected to know the technical side of newspaper typography," he would say. "But they will instinctively recognize that the best is satisfying, although they may not know the reason."

It was the same way in the use of illustrations. He watched them with the greatest care, and when anything got in that was below standard, the staff heard from it. His associates sometimes used jokingly to tell him that what he really needed for The Star was an art staff made up of a Rembrandt, a Corot and a Whistler, and a staff of writers that included a Dickens, a Balzac and a Kipling.

"And we could afford to pay for them if we could get them," he would retort. "The people want the best there is."

The importance of the reporter was constantly emphasized in The Star office. To be useful around a newspaper a man, in his opinion, must have the instinct of the reporter. He might report news, or he might report ideas. But at bottom he must be a reporter and not a "journalist"—a word the edi-

tor of The Star had no patience with. His ideas on the subject were sketched in an address which he prepared to be communicated by long distance telephone to an audience in one of the "journalism weeks" at the University of Missouri: —

There is just one point that I wish to emphasize to the young men who are expecting to engage in newspaper work: That is, that the reporter is the essential man on the newspaper. He is the big toad in the puddle.

Young fellows looking forward to a newspaper career often have in mind an editorship of some sort. They want to guide and instruct public opinion. The trouble is that the public does n't yearn to have its opinion guided and instructed. It wants to get the news and be entertained.

Such instruction as we have to impart must be made a secondary matter. If we can sneak up behind a man when he is n't looking and instruct him, all well and good. But if he gets the idea that our main purpose is to edify him, he runs so fast that we never can catch him.

This is merely to say that the reporter is the essential chap in a newspaper shop. We could get on pretty well without our various sorts of editors. But we should go to smash if we had no reporters. They are the fellows whose work determines whether the paper shall be dull or interesting; whether it shall attract readers or repel them.

Consider who are making the real newspapers and magazines to-day. Not the grave and learned publicist who is giving advice on the state of the Nation from the seclusion of some hole in the wall; not the recluse with a bunch of academic theories.

It is the reporter with the nose for news. He is the only fellow who has any business around newspapers or magazines. In general their job is not to produce literature, but to do reporting.

The essential, then, is the nose for news — the instinct to recognize the real story in an event or situation. This, I presume, is inborn. If a man has n't it, let him forsake the newspaper field. He will never make a success of it.

With this news instinct must come industry. Often a good pair of legs makes a good reporter. The newspaper man must always be on the job, always hustling, always ready to go to any inconvenience or suffer any fatigue to get the news. And above all, so far as the routine of reporting goes, he must be honest and accurate.

At the same time he must never be a machine. Many reporters are ruined by allowing themselves to become messengers of the city editor. They cover assignments, and that is all they do. But a newspaper can get plenty of men to do that for ten dollars a week. What is needed in reporting is initiative and imagination. The man who has the imagination to see a real story in an apparently commonplace happening and the initiative to go

after it and develop the story, is the sort of man every newspaper is looking for.

If in addition to these abilities comes a knack of writing, so much the better. The fortunate possessor of this combination is on the way to fame. But the ability to write is common and less valuable than the ability to dig out news.

I sometimes think that Providence is especially charged to watch over reporters. There seems to be something in their work that brings out the best there is in them.

In a long career in which I have dealt, I suppose, with hundreds of reporters, I have almost never known one to be false to his trust. Opportunities innumerable come to them to be dishonest — to color news, or suppress it. But it is the rarest thing in the world for them to be disloyal. We constantly trust young, little known fellows with the gravest concerns, and our confidence, as I said, is almost never misplaced.

It is a constant wonder to me that men are willing to make the adventure into newspaper work, until I recall that it is the most fascinating work in the world, and that when a man once gets the virus in his system he can't be beaten off with a club.

Finally, the reporter must be, above all, a good citizen in all that that term implies. He must be honest; he must be sincere. He must be against shams and frauds. His heart must be right. Mere smartness will never give permanent success.

So I would leave you with this last word: Make it your ambition to be great reporters. And everything else shall be added unto you.

The editorial room of The Star furnished a complete example of Mr. Nelson's democratic ideas. It was a thorough-going democracy, and the relations between the owner and every other man in the room were illustrative of it, as was the room itself. There were no partitions and no whispering galleries. Mr. Nelson's desk was in plain view and he sat at it every day. Any man in the room could go to him, and if he did n't go Mr. Nelson would send for him, for there was no such thing as working for The Star without being in the closest touch with the animating mind that directed it.

He knew every man in the room who had been on the paper any length of time, knew what he was doing and how well he was doing it. He consulted with reporters as freely as with his chief executives and knew the capabilities of each. To anybody unfamiliar with the working of so large an organization it would appear incredible that one man could personally direct it to the extent he personally directed The Star. He was able to do it only by reason of his marvelous hold on the

loyalty and affection of every man on the paper — that and his equally marvelous ability to inject into their minds the spirit and the ideas that animated his own. The flow of those ideas, the untiring energy back of them, the optimism, the buoyancy of his spirit under checks and defeats, his unshaken faith that right must win, the cheerfulness and youthfulness of his whole outlook on life and work were constant revelations to those about him.

While The Star in the thirty-five years of Mr. Nelson's unique editorship had grown to continental proportions, its field was primarily Kansas City and the Southwest. Its influence on newspaper standards and on social life in that section was very great. "Mr. Nelson," wrote William Allen White in Collier's after his death, "literally gave color to the life and thought and aspirations of ten millions of people living between the Missouri River and the Rio Grande in the formative years of their growth as commonwealths — part of the national commonwealth. He and they together were dreaming States and building them, each reacting upon the other. The aspirations of the people were caught by his sensitive brain, and he gave these

Herd Bulls, Iniza-Bar Farms

aspirations back in The Star policies. Kansas, Western Missouri, Oklahoma, Northern Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado form a fairly homogeneous section of our population. That section has grown up on The Star. Its religion, its conceptions of art, its politics, its business, its economic scale of living, reflect the influence of the indomitable mind of the man behind The Star, just as he gathered and voiced the latent visions of these people and gave them conscious form."

Much testimony of the same sort came from other editors, most of whom had never met him. One of these was the editor of the Republican of Anthony, Kansas. He wrote that he had lived for twenty-seven years under the influence of The Kansas City Star. "As the writer sums up the contributing influences toward his present self today," he said, "excepting the home alone, he feels The Kansas City Star has been the dominating influence in his life. The Great Chief whose philosophy we have tried to follow, whose opinion of right and justice, so far as we have been able to comprehend it, has become our own, whose valiant fight for the common people and the general good has set up for us a new hero, is gone. With

thousands of men and women in the great Middle West who have had a personal acquaintance with Mr. Nelson, yet have never seen him, we feel a personal loss."

In the same vein the Osborne Farmer of Osborne, Kansas, said: "The Star taught the small fellows to play the game square from a business standpoint. It taught them to hew to the line and express their honest convictions. It taught them to print the news and tell the truth and not depend on public pap for a living. That is why there are more good country newspapers in Kansas City territory than in any other territory of like area in the world."

"In all this territory," said the Tribune of Fort Scott, Kansas, "the moral standards have been raised, the civic spirit has been promoted and business prosperity has in a measure come through the activities of this one man. Though his earthly tabernacle be untenanted, Colonel Nelson lives in some measure in the lives of others who have come under the touch of his masterful and purposeful life."

In thus identifying the newspaper and the editor, these men were wholly correct.

Three years before his death he wrote his associates from his summer home in Magnolia, "I 'm afraid I may be wearying you by writing so much about details of the paper. But The Star is my life."

CHAPTER XIII

THE LAST WEEKS

Up to the last year of his life Mr. Nelson hardly had had an illness. His vitality was remarkable. It seemed to his associates that he never tired. It was always his custom to go to the office Saturday nights, and he never left until midnight. He invariably stayed at his desk until six o'clock or after. On one occasion, when he was seventy-two years old, he reached Kansas City one Saturday morning after a tiresome trip from Boston, drove at once in his car to his farm, thirty miles away, spent the day inspecting it, and went to the office for the evening. His simple, wholesome life, combined with his naturally robust constitution, was responsible for this physical vigor.

In 1914 he went through two particularly strenuous political campaigns. The first for nonpartisan commission government was no sooner ended than the second began. The street railway company took advantage of the election of a friendly mayor and of the exhaustion of the public from the cam-

paign to go after a thirty-year franchise. The granting of this franchise seemed to Mr. Nelson to be a blow to the future development of the city and he opposed it with all his enormous energy. The Star was the head and front of the opposition, and its editor took an active hand in directing the fight. Suggestions for editorials, for news articles, and for cartoons came from him in inexhaustible profusion. Hot weather always had been the enemy that had driven him out of town in the summer. He suffered great exhaustion from the heat. The franchise election was not held until July 7, and he refused to consider leaving town until it was over. It was a hot summer, and the strain told on him, although he would not admit it. After the election he went to Colorado Springs for the remainder of the summer. He enjoyed his stay there immensely and motored over a good share of the eastern part of the State.

When he returned from Colorado his friends noticed that he lacked his old-time physical vigor. But he never complained and, indeed, insisted that he was perfectly well. He spent his days at The Star office as usual. Late in the autumn he gave up to the extent of leaving the office at five o'clock

instead of six, and of staying at home Saturday nights. His last visit to The Star was Saturday, December 5.

For the next three months he was able to be about the house and he took as active a hand as ever in the direction of The Star. He had telephones installed in various rooms and he was in hourly communication with the office. By eight o'clock in the morning he usually called up to outline editorials and make suggestions regarding articles.

The plight of the poor in the cold of winter was of immense concern to him. He took a great interest, not only in a large gift which he made to the Provident Association, but also in suggesting features for the paper that might bring more relief.

He was absorbed, too, in the work of the soup kitchen which his daughter inaugurated and conducted. He was interested in every detail of it and insisted on full reports of its operation.

One Saturday night, in his last illness, while The Star was helping in a campaign to raise money for the Provident Association, Mr. Nelson called the office. He was too weak to sit up and he had the

telephone held to his lips as he lay in bed. He wanted to suggest a sentiment to be hand-lettered and printed across the top of the page for Sunday morning. With some difficulty he dictated the sentences to be used: —

"On this His day the Lord asks only for His poor. If the people of Kansas City were as generous to the Lord as the Lord has been good to them, there would be here no hunger, no poverty, no want."

"What I want to do," he said, "is to get in on some of these rich men who go to church with prayer-books under their arms and never do anything for anybody. They think our Saviour wore a frock coat and a silk hat. I want to get them to see that he belonged to the poor."

In his illness his friends remembered him with gifts of flowers. He spoke of the remembrances with great appreciation. "But," he would add, "I have everything in the world here that I can possibly need. There are women and children in Kansas City suffering for lack of food and clothing. I wish these gifts could go to them."

Several weeks before his death, facing the knowledge that his illness was to terminate fatally, he said to a friend: "The Lord has been far better to

me than I deserved. I have had a long and happy life, with great opportunities for usefulness. My only regret is that I have not accomplished more. But if this is the end I am ready."

His own religion was intensely practical. While he personally suggested the use of the Scripture lesson in The Star on Sundays and followed this with excerpts from great sermons, he felt that he could best show devotion to God by doing justly and loving mercy.

It was a matter of religion with him that The Star should fight for high ideals and great causes. "A heavy obligation has been intrusted to us," he would say to his associates in The Star office. "We would be worse than criminals if we should fail in our duty."

While not a communicant of any church, he was fundamentally and essentially religious. His reverence for God was as real and profound as his devotion to his fellow-men. In those rare moods when he could talk with his associates about his deepest convictions he would speak of his faith in the Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness and of his own sense of obligation.

He was serenely confident that the universe was

the expression of a Righteous Creator; that in the end right would triumph; and that no evil could befall a good man in death.

"I have tried to do my duty and be a good man," he said one day in an intimate conversation with an old friend. To be a "good man." It was the key-note to his character.

His trouble was a stoppage of the liver which interfered with nutrition and with the elimination of toxins. Gradually he became weaker, but his mental activity showed no diminution. Early in March he sent for some of the members of his staff for a consultation about the Election Reform Bill then pending in the Missouri Legislature. He talked for half an hour with his old-time vigor about the fundamental necessity for a democracy of honest elections. The Star must fight for this cause with all its resources. He might not be on earth to see the end of the fight, but the fight must be won.

The next day he called the office on the telephone to suggest some editorials and a cartoon. His last editorial appeared in the morning edition of The Star for Saturday, March 6. It was an appeal for the Democratic Party in Missouri, controlling the

legislature, to show itself a progressive, Wilson party by passing the election bill. The editorial follows: —

ROOM FOR A WILSON PARTY?

Is there room in Missouri for a Wilson Democratic Party? The fate of the Election Bill is going to show whether there is.

In the afternoon edition of the same day appeared the last cartoon of his suggestion, representing a symbolic figure of Missouri appealing to the legislature in the name of the great Virginia Presidents to live up to their standards by reforming the election system.

Mr. Nelson did not see his last work in print. Friday afternoon, March 5, he suddenly became unconscious from uræmic poisoning. His physicians believed he would never rally. His remarkable strength brought him through, however, and on Tuesday he regained consciousness. But his work was ended. He was too weak to make further suggestions about the conduct of The Star. One final message, indeed, he sent by his son-in-law, Mr. Kirkwood. He was restless one night and sent for Mr. Kirkwood at midnight. "Those messages of

sympathy and appreciation have been fine," he said. "But remind the men at the office of one thing. The interests that are against Kansas City are still in control. The fight on them must n't let up, no matter if they do say nice things about me."

The next month was a constant fight on the part of his physicians to prolong his life in the hope that his recuperative powers would prove sufficient to restore him. "If he were only twenty years younger," they said. But he continued to grow weaker, and only repeated injections of a saline solution prevented the recurrence of uræmia. It irked him to make what he felt was a hopeless fight. "When it comes my time to go," he said repeatedly in the last few years, "I want to go down with my colors flying." He could not bear the thought of living uselessly merely for the sake of living. Finally he had a set-to with the doctor immediately in charge. "You are keeping me alive to no purpose," he said. "I thought you were my friend. You are n't acting like one. I am not afraid to die. The next time let me go. It is no kindness to keep me alive."

That very afternoon he had his wish. He be-

came unconscious, lingered peacefully in that state five days, and died at two o'clock the morning of April 13, 1915.

At Oak Hall when the end came were all the surviving members of the immediate family: Mrs. Nelson and their only child, Mrs. Kirkwood; Mr. Kirkwood, and Mr. Nelson's sisters, Mrs. Henry W. Bond and Miss Eva R. Nelson.

CHAPTER XIV

AS HE WAS KNOWN TO HIS HELPERS ON THE STAR

When word came to the office of The Star that Mr. Nelson's illness had become critical, and that he would probably die within twenty-four hours, the following sketch was written by A. B. Macdonald, of The Star. It was published in that paper the day after Mr. Nelson's death: —

Mr. Nelson was the biggest and broadest man mentally I ever knew, and in my twenty-five years in newspaper work I met many of the greatest men of this country.

I have been with him for twenty years, and I had a higher respect and a deeper affection for him than for any other man except my own father.

There was nothing hypocritical, mean, small, narrow, bigoted, or cowardly in him. He did not like a man who had any of those characteristics, and he would not have one around him if he knew it. He tried to have the staff of The Star made up of men for whom he had a personal liking. He often spoke of those men as "The Star family,"

and that was his attitude toward the men who worked for him and with him.

He usually had a man from the office with him on his summer vacations; sometimes several of the men would be with him at different times in one vacation. It was my good fortune to be with him in Colorado Springs last summer. Those were wonderful days, for Mr. Nelson was the most companionable of men. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes and good stories, and his soul overflowed with cheerfulness and laughter.

"Why don't you wait and go to breakfast with me?" he asked one morning.

I explained to him that I could not sleep with the knowledge that I was missing the sight of the sun clearing the mists from the crown of Pike's Peak, and creeping down its rugged, dull red slope, and that this pulled me out of bed early every morning; and, as I did not like the great dining-room of the hotel, with its convoy of waiters and its other formalities, I was in the habit of arising at six o'clock and going down the street to a charming little café where most luscious cantaloupes were served.

"By George," he said, "you get me out early

House designing and building were among Mr. Nelson's relaxations
(A typical Nelson house on Forty-seventh Street)

after this and I'll go down and eat with you at that place."

I told him that maybe it would not look dignified enough for him to do that. Every one knew him in the Springs; delegations had waited upon him; they had "made" a great deal over him out there (as people did wherever he went), and it might be a little out of place for him to go for his meals to a cheap café.

A day or two afterward we motored to Cañon City and on the way reached Pueblo at luncheon-time. One in the party suggested the hotel.

"No, sir. We are among strangers now and that 'dignity' argument of yours won't go. Let's go to the lunch-room in the depot and eat off the counter. I haven't done that for a long time," he said with a laugh. We did it, and he enjoyed it immensely.

One day Mr. and Mrs. Nelson motored away back into the mountains to revisit a little hotel where they had spent a vacation, soon after they were married, back in the days when The Star was struggling to get upon its feet. On the way we came at luncheon-time to a small frame hotel in a valley, and Mr. Nelson said: —

"I wonder if we can't eat here; it looks clean and good."

He was always on the lookout for such out-of-the-way places. Soon the meal was ready, and when we went in the good woman had placed a plate for the chauffeur on a side table. Mr. Nelson noticed it and ordered that the plate be put at his table.

"Collins [the chauffeur] is one of our party," he said.

Wherever he went Mr. Nelson always attracted attention because of the great strength of character in his face and the natural dignity of his bearing. People always turned to look after him and to ask who he was.

This time when we came out of the dining-room there was a string of guests sitting along the narrow porch of the little hotel. They had been wondering who he was, and one of them, an old man, determined to find out, arose and said, as he put out his hand: —

"My name is [so and so] from Chandler, Oklahoma."

"Glad to meet you, sir; my name is Nelson of Kansas City."

"Not Mr. Nelson of the Star?" exclaimed the man in astonishment.

"Yes, I am Mr. Nelson."

"Well, sir," said the man as he shook his hand again, "I am proud to meet you, Mr. Nelson. I have taken your paper for twenty-five years. I've read everything you ever wrote and I never knew you to be wrong yet. Your paper is the best paper in the world and I've always wanted to meet you."

At that the others on the veranda got up and came forward. A woman shook his hand and said: —

"I am from Beloit, Kansas, and we take The Star and it is our favorite paper."

Then, in turn, a man from Springfield, Missouri, a woman from Tulsa, Oklahoma, a man from Garden City, Kansas, and a man and his wife from some place in Nebraska, each shook hands, and each assured him that they were Star subscribers, liked it better than any other paper, and believed in his policies.

Each person in that group, from widely separated places, was a reader of The Star.

"Well," said Mr. Nelson, beaming with delight, "we are not strangers after all, but friends."

The incident made a deep impression upon him, and on the way, afterward, he talked much about it. He talked of the purposes and aims of The Star. The paper had recently been defeated in its effort to prevent the street-railway company from fastening upon Kansas City an iniquitous franchise.

In speaking of that, he said: "The Star cannot be defeated if it is right. An election that goes contrary to its policies is only a temporary setback, and not a defeat. Right will always triumph in the end; it must prevail."

And then he talked of the future. He was planning then for The Star to do all it could to help in the approaching campaign to banish saloons and roadhouses from rural Jackson County, and to take part in the political county campaign in the fall. He said that as long as he lived The Star would keep on fighting for the right things, regardless of all, and he hoped that the paper would continue, one hundred years after he was dead, to be a militant, fighting force in the community.

He told why The Star so strongly opposed the saloon.

"If they will bring me one man, just one, that whisky has ever benefited, I will give up my

fight against it; and they can have the whole country to search in for that one man," he said.

He said that the ownership of a newspaper with the far-reaching circulation and influence of The Star was a great responsibility.

He thought that whiskey was a curse, that eventually its sale would be prohibited by national law, that this day was not far away, and that it was his duty to do what he could to hasten that day, just as it was his duty, through his paper, to fight election thievery and other evils that oppressed the people. His father before him was an ardent opponent of whisky, too.

"Some of the dearest friends I ever had were ruined and done to death by whisky," he said. And he told the story of one of the best friends of his youth in Fort Wayne, a brilliant, handsome young man, with the brightest prospects and opportunities in life, who married one of the finest young women in Indiana, and then got into the habit of drinking, and drifted down and down to abject poverty. His wife died heartbroken. The man, aged before his time, irresolute, his moral stamina gone, came to Kansas City and applied to Mr. Nelson for help. He fitted him out, got him

a position, watched over him, helped him, wrestled with him, tried in every way to stand him on his feet; but it was no use, whisky had sapped the last shred of moral fiber in him, and he died, a wreck.

Mr. Nelson had helped many men in their fight against whisky, had sent them to take the "cure," had given them chance after chance, had rejoiced in their victory, if they won; had grieved at their failure, if they lost.

No wonder he hated the traffic, with a deep, abiding hatred that would not even permit a whisky or beer advertisement to appear in The Star.

It was on the return from this trip into the mountains that his motor-car, hurrying to get back to Colorado Springs in time for dinner, approached a hen and her brood of chickens in the road. The chauffeur swerved to one side to avoid them, but the hen suddenly ran across, her brood behind her, directly in front of the machine, and too late to avoid running them down. Mr. Nelson, on the rear seat, gave a cry of alarm, and rose to look back. A wheel had run over one of the chicks and crushed it.

"Too bad, too bad," he said; and that night, looking back over the day, which had been a peculiarly pleasurable one, he said:—

"The day was marred by just one thing."

"What was that?" I asked.

"The chicken we killed."

The early mornings of his days at Colorado Springs, the delightful days of the last vacation he was destined ever to have, were spent in work. He had the paper read to him. His eyesight was poor and it was a hard strain for him to read. He commented upon each article. When a piece impressed him as being uncommonly well written he would give directions to find out who wrote it. He often sent a telegram of congratulation to the writer. Once a poem written by one of the reporters caught him and he sent a telegram to the reporter, praising his work. Another time it was an interview with an army officer in Fort Leavenworth and he sent congratulations to that reporter.

"I am proud," he said, "to discover a young man with the right stuff in him. It fills me with delight to find a boy of that kind with us."

At this time he got word that one of his young men had resigned to go into business for himself. Mr. Nelson inquired all about the prospects of the new business, and when he learned that they were good he was greatly pleased.

"I always regret to see a member of The Star family go," he said. "But when they do go it pleases me immensely to see them do well. I always want them to get on in the world, and succeed."

A little later he said: "Now, you sit down and write out a letter to him for me. Just the kind of a letter you would like me to write you if you were leaving The Star, something that will show him how much I appreciate his work, something to encourage him. He 's going into business for himself now and may find hard sledding for a while; let 's encourage him. I am getting too old to write much."

After the letter was written he said: "Bully, bully, that 's just what I had in mind to say."

I proposed that I should run the letter off on the typewriter.

"No," he said, "let Ben do that. I want him to write all the letters and improve his mind in that way."

Ben was his personal attendant. He had come to Mr. Nelson years before, from Sweden, when he could not speak English. Mr. Nelson had taken a deep personal interest in the improve-

ment of his mind, and under his tutelage Ben had learned to speak English fluently and correctly and to write it as well as the average high-school graduate. Ben's letters were models of correctness, with never a grammatical error or a word misspelled. Ben's devotion to Mr. Nelson was like that of a son to his father, and Mr. Nelson had a high regard for him.

I planned to go far up into the mountains one day on a "wild-flower excursion" by train, and when I spoke of it to Mr. Nelson he said: —

"Take Ben with you. It will be a great thing for him."

I did, and when we returned Mr. Nelson asked: "How did Ben enjoy it?"

Mr. Nelson was very much interested in the geology of the Pike's Peak region, and I found a book in the public library in Colorado Springs which told all about it and, having read that, I was equipped to speak as one having authority on that subject. The next day, while we were motoring on a high point which overlooked the whole valley of the Boiling River, with the Garden of the Gods and Pike's Peak in the background, I began to explain how all that region was formed.

"Wait, wait," interrupted Mr. Nelson; "I want Ben to hear that."

So we stopped the car and I delivered a lecture on the geology of it, telling about the primeval sea that once covered all that region, how the granite mass of Pike's Peak was shoved up and up, how the red in the rocks of the Garden of the Gods was caused by iron in them, how they came to be tilted up on end, and all the rest of it. After I had finished and we were moving on again, Mr. Nelson said to me, with keenest pleasure: —

"Did you notice how Ben drank that all in? He never missed a word, and he will never forget a word of it, either. He has a very keen mind."

And Ben was his valet. I relate these incidents simply to try and give an impression of Mr. Nelson's attitude of mind toward those who worked for him.

He was opposed to ironclad discipline, to what he called a "brass-collar" rule in the office. He had none of that. He took it for granted that men would do their work, would give the best that was in them to The Star without being goaded or watched. He said he wanted each man on The Star to feel that he was a part of the paper; that

its achievements depended upon his work as much as upon the work of the owner or any other man. And, above all, Mr. Nelson wanted a feeling of comradeship between all the men and between himself and each man. That was why the whole editorial force was grouped in one big room, without a partition or dividing line in it, and Mr. Nelson's desk amid the others, where the office boy was as free and welcome to talk with him as was his managing editor.

He invited suggestions, was glad to have the men come to him with ideas, and felt neglected if they did not, and often spoke of the fine spirit of coöperation that existed among the men.

One night in Colorado Springs he talked long about this, and his voice thrilled with enthusiasm and pride when he spoke of the body of men which made up The Star force.

"You can't find their equal in all America," he said. "There is not a man among them for whom I have not a high personal regard."

Mr. Nelson always felt a keen disappointment when a young man who had promised well turned out to be not dependable. It took more than brilliancy, more than the mere ability to write well,

to get a permanent position on The Star. A man had to be the right sort, in character, in reliability, as well as in ability. But when he had proved his worth, and had been taken into The Star family, Mr. Nelson was his loyal friend through thick and thin, and nothing could happen, no tongue could utter flings enough to shake the loyalty of Mr. Nelson to the men he trusted and had faith in.

Very often a reporter, in the pursuance of his work, would make bitter enemies, who thirsted for revenge, and sometimes they sought to have the reporter lose his place. No man who ever tried that got a hearing from Mr. Nelson.

Once a politician, whose underhand doings had been commented upon by a reporter, came to the office and told Mr. Nelson that the reporter had a personal spite against him and had threatened to run him out of town by means of attacks in The Star.

"That reporter never said it. I know him," said Mr. Nelson.

The politician persisted.

"I 'll call him over here and prove to you that he never said it," said Mr. Nelson.

The reporter was called over and he denounced the politician as a liar and proved him to be a liar.

The only comment made by Mr. Nelson was to the reporter. "I knew you were not a piker," he said, and he turned his back upon the politician and would not have another word to say to him.

He never spoke an unkind word to a man in his employ. He was always kind, courteous, and in conversation with a reporter always met him as an equal.

Reporters would make mistakes, but they were never censured by Mr. Nelson. Once an article written by a reporter brought contempt proceedings, and the judge threatened to send Mr. Nelson to jail. When the contempt writ was issued, the reporter, out upon his work, was summoned to come to the office. He came in an uneasy frame of mind, for in what he had written was a slight error. But when he reached the desk of Mr. Nelson there was no word of fault-finding, of censure. He inquired if the article was true in the main, and, being told that it was, he brought his hand down with a resounding blow upon his desk and said: —

"Then we will fight the writ."

And he did fight. His political enemies prophesied the dire things they would do to Mr. Nel-

son. He might be a brave man at his desk in The Star office, but they would take that all out of him when they got him before the court. They would wilt him and make him beg for mercy.

Those who were in the courtroom that day will never forget the scene; the noble dignity of the white-haired man, while about him shuffled and whispered and leered the crowd of political creatures; and he the only calm, unruffled, unexcited one amid it all. The political rabble that day was given to glimpse the strength of character of a great man, and it awed them, absolutely awed them. Then they began to sense the wrong they were doing, and it shamed them. When the proceedings were over, even the judge on the bench saw that his crowd had slunk away from him.

The men who worked for Mr. Nelson knew on all occasions exactly what the policy of The Star would be upon any question, as soon as it arose. As soon as a man was mentioned as a candidate for office any one on The Star could tell you whether the paper would oppose him, and the same with political movements, and civic movements of all kinds. Were they on the square for the public good? That was all. If they were n't,

it was all settled beforehand that they could never have the support of The Star.

In twenty years' intimate relations with him I never knew him to be wrong on any question. He was always right and always far-seeing.

I never knew Mr. Nelson to be denounced by an honest man or an honest newspaper. I have known honest men to differ from him, but I am speaking of the vituperation that has been launched against him at various times. That always came from men we knew were crooks, whether the public knew it or not. Those things always hurt us; they stung our indignation into fury; they were so cruelly false, and he was so wholly the opposite of what they pictured him to be. But he never bothered about those attacks, and he never heard or saw them. He was too big and too fine a gentleman to be drawn into an argument with such men; and so he went on, straight ahead, with a sure and undisturbed poise.

I have had many of those enemies of The Star say to me: "There must be something fine in the character of Nelson after all, for I never knew a man who worked for him say a word against him; they are always loyal."

About a year ago one of the reporters who had been with The Star a long time died suddenly of heart disease. After the funeral Mr. Nelson said to one of his men: "You go out and see his widow and find out how they are situated."

The report came back that they owed on a house they were paying for, and that the three children were not yet through school, but would be in a year or two. Mr. Nelson ordered that the name of that reporter be kept upon the pay-roll for two years, which would give time for the house to be paid for and the children to finish school. One of the children comes every pay-day and takes home her father's salary.

This was done so quietly that the printing of it here will be news to even the majority of reporters on The Star.

I know of only a few of his charities. He gave much, but he never mentioned it. Here is an example of it: Some fifteen or twenty years ago Mr. Nelson discovered one of his old schoolteachers living in poverty in Kansas City and too aged to do anything. Mr. Nelson supported the family until the old teacher died, and then he paid the funeral expenses. He kept on supporting the son and

Shrubbery was a feature in the Rockhill District

daughter until the son died, and he paid for his funeral. The daughter is still being supported, and will continue to be, because Mr. Nelson laid the solemn injunction upon his secretary: "No matter what happens, you always see that she is cared for."

There are many such cases, but he would not care to have them told about, maybe. The only object in mentioning one or two here is to show the public a side of his character people knew little of.

I have tried to write here, not of his great works, — they are part of the history of Kansas City, — but a little of the nobility of his soul and the human side of his nature, and he was very human and large-hearted and tender.

The public did not know him well. He seldom went to public places. I saw him only once in a theater. He was too busy for that, and he abhorred display. There are thousands of persons in Kansas City who never saw him, and too many of them have formed their opinions of him from the abuse of ranting politicians who sought by that means to nullify the effect of the truth about themselves and their schemes, which The Star was prone to tell.

But those who knew him best were strongly attached to him.

A newspaper office is a busy place, and it buzzes with industry. But when the word came that there had been a decided change for the worse in the condition of Mr. Nelson the hum of conversation stopped, and for the rest of the day there was silence, a pathetic silence, in which men worked with drawn faces.

For months the big armchair at his desk had stood vacant, and each knew, deep down in his mind, that maybe Mr. Nelson would never sit there again, but that possibility was never spoken of. There had always been a hope, and we said bravely to each other: —

"Of course he will pull through; you just wait until the leaves come out in the warm spring days."

But when the word came we all knew. It had to be faced then. And there had to be something written, and that hurriedly, too; and we went at it. But it is hard to write through tears.

CHAPTER XV

THE SORROW OF THE CITY

On the day of Mr. Nelson's death the whole city went into mourning. The feelings of vast numbers of people were doubtless expressed in a letter received at the office of The Star from a bookkeeper who never had seen him. "My most intimate friend," he wrote, "is gone." The flags on all public buildings and on stores and office buildings were set at half-mast.

Commemorative resolutions were adopted by virtually every organization in the city. More than sixty took such action. They ranged from the local carpenters' union, the Ministerial Alliance, the Jackson County Medical Society, and the United Jewish Charities, to both houses of the City Council, the City Club, the Commercial Club, and the Mercantile Club of Kansas City, Kansas. The carpenters' union called attention to the fact that he was "the friend of organized labor, always employing union men, and always willing to pay the highest scale"; the Ministerial Alliance to his

making The Star the champion of "the rights of the poor and weak" and to the cleanness of the paper; while the Commercial Club gave this recognition: —

William Rockhill Nelson, Citizen.

That he was in the highest sense of the word.

He held citizenship as an honor and as a trust granted him by his city, his State, and his country — a privilege for which he was bound to make return by unremitting service. And Kansas City received that service from William R. Nelson as did the State and Nation.

It was our city's great fortune to have him choose it as his home. The tremendous impulse which his belief in Kansas City's future gave toward the realization of its greatness was felt at the very beginning of his citizenship here. Entering a new community that was unformed, undeveloped, and with only a vigorous aggressiveness to give it any distinction, his far-seeing vision, his broad perspective and his never-failing faith and optimism combined to make the community distinguished as a place of beauty and of achievement as well.

Where others saw Kansas City one of a score of American cities, to him it was the one city of America.

His daring, continuous expression of his belief in Kansas City, involving every energy of his splendid equipment, was never content with the

results achieved; the present beautiful community was to him only the basis of a yet more glorious metropolis always developing on lines of exerted truth, attractiveness and permanence.

With him it was ever a warring against a complacent city when the splendor of Kansas City brought comment. That noble and stimulating spirit of discontent with present achievement is one of our heritages from the great, the confident, the resourceful builder and leader who has just now yielded to the inevitable.

In the institution that he developed in Kansas City he was actuated by what he believed always to be his plain duty to the people of the city, of the Great West and of the Nation. Unswerving allegiance to his keen convictions of what was right and important was the dominant note of his character, and in his conduct of The Star he would not permit himself to waver or hesitate, whatever the immediate effect upon himself or his newspaper. The magnificent success of that newspaper is a mere incident of his faith in those principles.

Telegrams of sympathy came from every part of the country. President Wilson wired that "the whole country will mourn the loss of a great editor and citizen." Ex-President Taft referred to him as "a man of most exceptional ability, great power, and the widest influence, which he exer-

cised with undaunted courage for the right as he saw it." Ex-President Roosevelt's message said: "We have lost literally one of the foremost citizens of the United States, one of the men whom our Republic could least afford to spare."

Sentences from a few of the several hundred telegrams received at the office of The Star will show how widespread was the sense of loss in his death: —

Secretary McAdoo: "A high-minded, courageous, and useful citizen, whose death is a distinct loss to the country." President Hadley, of Yale: "The importance of work like his in the development of the United States is very great indeed." Rabbi Wise, of New York: "He was a great tribune of the American people." Governor Johnson, of California: "He typified the best in journalism, the highest citizenship, the loftiest patriotism." Ex-Governor Hodges, of Kansas: "His influence was always on the side of the man who labored for a daily wage." Dr. Washington Gladden, of Columbus, Ohio: "The ideal newspaper will come sooner because of him." Ex-Senator Beveridge: "In his death the Nation loses one of its strongest, bravest, and most far-seeing patriots." Norman

Hapgood, editor of Harper's Weekly: "He was one of our bravest, most original, and most useful Americans." Frank A. Munsey, of the Munsey publications: "A great constructive journalist." Secretary Daniels: "One of the ablest journalists America has produced." Frau Schumann-Heink: "One of the country's noblest citizens." Arthur Brisbane, of the Hearst publications: "The people of this country have cause to mourn the death of a courageous fighter." M. E. Stone, general manager of the Associated Press: "A dauntless fighter for the right." E. A. Van Valkenburg, of the Philadelphia North American: "His death is a national calamity." J. S. Phillips, editor of the American Magazine: "We shall miss Colonel Nelson's force, human sense, and right-mindedness in journalism." A. S. Ochs, publisher of the New York Times: "Journalism has lost one of its best examples of the right kind of independence, courage, ability, and enterprise." William Allen White: "It is of the first importance to this generation that there lived and wrought here a fine, free soul with a trained mind which fashioned out of the world about him every day he lived the reality of a great dream of democracy."

Newspaper and magazine comment was of the same sort. Every city mourned his death. More than six hundred newspapers and magazines were represented in periodicals that reached The Star office, and these included only a part of what was published.

Said Harper's Weekly: —

Col. William R. Nelson did not wait for others to set fashions. He began things himself. For more than thirty years he made The Kansas City Star a force, a leader, a help. He feared nobody. The forces and trenches of money and society found him undismayed. And he was hard-headed about it. His specialty was not hot air. The causes for which he contended were immediate, concrete. He dealt not in isms but in the next hard-fought step ahead. He never faltered. He was big, strong and sure. The Kansas City Star has been the most powerful journal of light between the Mississippi and the Pacific, and Colonel Nelson was The Star.

Collier's wrote: —

He took his place in journalism's Hall of Fame — and it was a high place, up beside Horace Greeley and Samuel Bowles — by kicking in the door with hobnailed boots. "I've tried to be gentle and diplomatic," he once explained, "but I've never done well in my stocking feet." He was set on

doing things, and if you got in his way he stepped on your neck. To describe his personality you had the choice between "dominant" and "domineering!" His friends called him "Colonel," his enemies, "Baron." He had no respect for labels (sometimes you found his paper supporting a Republican and sometimes a Democratic candidate for governor) and he was n't afraid of any man or set of men under heaven.

The Outlook said he stood "sincerely, and without a trace of cant, for public welfare." The New York World pronounced him "one of the ablest and most aggressive journalists of the day." The New York Globe referred to "his idealism, his keen vision, his unfaltering courage, his passion for the common good." The Boston Transcript spoke of his creation of The Star into "a national newspaper with a definite purpose in life and a soul patterned after that of the aggressive thinker and fighter who stood sponsor for it." "Compromise with any power he regarded as evil," said the Chicago Herald, "was for him simply unthinkable." The Philadelphia Public Ledger commented on the fact that he had put his newspaper "imperturbably above the dollar mark." The Washington Star spoke of his passion for "civic ideals"; the

Richmond Times-Dispatch of his "contempt for sham and pretense." The Shreveport Journal said he "endowed Kansas City with his genius for construction." The Daily Eastern Argus of Portland, Maine, spoke of his "notable personality," and the Morning Oregonian of Portland, Oregon, said that "what Kansas City is may be credited in considerable measure to him." The Sacramento Bee expressed belief that he had done much "to make life better worth the living in Kansas City and the Southwest." "Colonel Nelson," said the St. Paul Dispatch, "taught us, his countrymen, that a great spirit may free itself from the temptation of wealth and of ambition, to use that wealth for a high moral purpose." "The Star," was the Louisville Courier-Journal's comment, "knew only what its editor conceived the public welfare." "He used The Star," said the Atlanta Constitution, "to fight humanity's battles." "Though his earthly tabernacle be untenanted," wrote the Fort Scott Tribune, "Colonel Nelson lives in some measure incarnate in the lives of others who have come under the touch of his masterful, purposeful life."

The Service Bulletin of the Associated Press referred to Mr. Nelson's "great interest in

the development of the Associated Press," and added: —

He was one of the great figures of American journalism. This repute was due not altogether to the solid ability which made The Star a forceful and successful newspaper, but to the sterling independence and unaffected simplicity which were cardinal traits of Colonel Nelson's character.

The directors of the Associated Press adopted this resolution, which expressed the feeling of his associates among newspaper publishers throughout the country: —

That the death of a private citizen, who was not the incumbent of a public office and never had been, should be seriously characterized as a public calamity is a high testimonial of individual worth and a conclusive evidence of unusual accomplishment in the serious activities of life. We, who enjoyed the intimacies of personal association with William Rockhill Nelson during the nine years he served as a member of this board, feel that there is no exaggeration of phrase in speaking of his passing from life as a public loss of such moment that it may be deliberately and truthfully said: "It was a public calamity."

Sharing in an exceptional degree the feeling of distinct personal bereavement the decease of a friend inevitably occasions, we attest not only

that sentiment in this formal record, but our sense of the service Colonel Nelson rendered to his profession, to the city and State in which he lived and to the whole country during his long and successful career as an editor and publisher. We had peculiar opportunities to appraise the rugged force of his character, the unwavering courage with which he adhered to personal convictions when once established. We know that he made a newspaper that was big enough to make and shape the development of the community for which it was published, that it was an exemplar of the best and highest standards of journalism, and we know as well that this newspaper was in every characteristic feature merely a material embodiment of the man who was its owner and director.

On the afternoon of the funeral business generally was suspended. By order of the Postmaster-General all departments of the post-office were closed while the services were in progress. For five minutes at the opening of the services not a wheel turned on the street railroad. The public schools were dismissed at noon. The courts, the public offices of Kansas City, Kansas, part of those of Kansas City, Missouri, the live stock exchange and the board of trade were closed.

Governor Arthur Capper, of Kansas, asked that

every newspaper office in that State be closed during the hour of the funeral, and his request was generally observed. In making this request Governor Capper issued the following announcement: —

I know of no man who has had more to do with the moulding of the best thought in the West; no man who has had larger part in the substantial upbuilding of this wonderful country, and his passing is a distinct loss to all of us. The great business which he has builded will stand as a fitting monument to his memory and will take rank among the foremost achievements of newspaperdom.

Kansas editors generally have at one time or another been favored by Colonel Nelson and I believe they will feel like showing respect to their dead friend. I wish that every newspaper plant in the entire State might be closed during the hour of the funeral.

The services at Oak Hall were conducted by Bishop Cameron Mann, an old-time friend, who came from Florida for the purpose. Thousands of persons thronged the grounds, unable to get inside the house.

Memorial services were held, first by the Rotary Club, in which all the civic organizations of

the city participated, and later by a general meeting at the call of a citizens' committee at the Grand Opera House. Victor Murdock, ex-representative from Kansas, and Henry J. Allen, editor of the Wichita Beacon, joined with Frank P. Walsh, chairman of the Industrial Relations Commission, and local speakers, in memorial addresses.

"I never knew a man," said Mr. Allen, "who understood the mass mind better, or trusted it more." "I do not know where his soul is," said Dante Barton, of The Star; "but I do know that, wherever it is, it is unafraid. I do know that other souls are leaning on it, taking courage and good cheer from it." "Many men," said Mr. Murdock, "have character. Few have prophecy. The greatest of the earth have had the two. I shall always think of William R. Nelson so. Many of us are men of deeds. Many of us are men of dreams. But he could both do and dream and he could turn dream into deed."

Letters were read from President Wilson and ex-President Roosevelt. Mr. Wilson wrote that Mr. Nelson had "left a deep and abiding mark upon the annals of his profession." Said Colonel Roosevelt: "There was no more useful or more

patriotic citizen in the United States; no man who better exemplified how to be the highest type of public servant, although in private life. He was one of the stanchest and most loyal friends that ever lived. I mourn him as a friend. I mourn him still more deeply as an American citizen."

CHAPTER XVI

HIS ALL TO THE PEOPLE

Mr. Nelson's will, in its disposition of his estate, carried out the theories of a lifetime. His entire fortune, including his newspaper properties, was left to the public. Its income, he provided, should be used for the purchase of "works and reproductions of works of the fine arts, such as paintings, engravings, sculpture, tapestries, and rare books." His wife and daughter were to have the use of the income through their lives. After their death the estate was to be managed by trustees for the people of Kansas City. His extensive Sni-a-Bar farms of seventeen hundred and fifty acres, thirty miles from Kansas City, were for thirty years to be made models for the instruction of the people of the surrounding country in stock-raising. After that time they were to become part of the general estate to be devoted to art.

It was his conviction that the continued success of the American system of government, and the development of a great people, required the break-

ing-up of large fortunes. Their perpetuation, he felt, would tend to restrict opportunity and discourage initiative. He favored an inheritance tax that would permit a man to provide for his immediate family for a considerable period, and then would take the bulk of the property for the State. So far as was practicable he sought to apply this principle in his own case.

His interest in art dated from his early visits to Europe. He had an instinct for the beautiful in architecture, in typography, in manners, in every department of life. The great paintings of Europe fascinated him. He never made the slightest pretensions to being an art critic or an expert on the subject. But his own feelings generally coincided with the verdict of time. He began to acquire originals for his home. He picked up a Reynolds, a Corot, a Troyon, a Monet, a Constable, a Gainsborough, a splendid Ribera, and others. Then his thought turned to Kansas City. It had no pictures. He felt that a collection of originals would not be practical. The cost would be prohibitive. Besides it was impossible to get the best of the classic pictures. They were not for sale. While he was in Florence he made the acquaintance of the Pisani

family. They were extensive dealers and made a specialty of copies. In their private gallery were some admirable copies more than a hundred years old. It occurred to Mr. Nelson that a gallery of copies in the size of the originals, made by competent artists, would be the solution of his difficulty. He set a severe standard. No copy was considered unless it was made by a man of the highest standing. The nucleus was obtained from the Pisani gallery. Others were added, and in 1896 he sent to Kansas City nineteen copies of great paintings. They were all the exact size of the originals, and identical even to the frames. The "Sistine Madonna" copy is the only one of the same size which was ever permitted to be made. The originals of many of the paintings are so fine that even indifferent copies could not fail to have some of their qualities, but the copies that Kansas City now has are in themselves distinct achievements. With the copies there were four hundred and fifty photographs of paintings representing most of the important schools of the past. More than thirty casts of pieces by Donatello and others were in the collection.

The museum was opened to the public Febru-

ary 24, 1897, under the auspices of the Kansas City Art Association. The conditions of the gift, as announced by Mr. Nelson, again showed his thought of the public. The name given to the collection should include the term "Western." This was to emphasize that it was Kansas City's collection and was intended to localize it. And the collection was to be open on Sundays, so that busy people could see it.

Mr. Nelson kept adding to the collection from time to time. The most important additions were made in 1900, when A. Marinus Broekman, of Amsterdam, an experienced and recognized painter, was commissioned by Mr. Nelson to paint copies of the famous Rembrandt, "The Night Watch," and of five other paintings, three by Franz Hals and one — "The Entombment," — by Ribera. As copies alone these are distinguished. Mr. Nelson bought at the same time some other copies by Altman, which had been sent by the Netherlands Government to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. These were of the Hals "Reunion of the Officers of St. Andrew," Paul Potter's "Young Bull," and Van der Helst's "Banquet of the Civic Guard."

Two most unusual copies are in the collection. They are the Velasquez "The Tapestry Weavers" and "The Maids of Honor," painted in his student days by William M. Chase. It might be said they are as much Chase as Velasquez. The collection now numbers sixty paintings, a sixty that few have the opportunity of seeing in the original.

It was this gallery that he sought to perpetuate and develop for the people of Kansas City by the provisions of his will. He directed that the art works that were to be purchased were to be such "as are not usually provided for by public fund." It was his constant fear that influence might be exerted to get unworthy paintings or pieces of sculpture in the collection. So he provided that the works to be purchased must be by artists who had been dead at least thirty years. That rule, he felt, would exclude the personal element so far as possible. The estate was to be administered by his wife and daughter, who were to derive the income for life, and provision was made for possible grandchildren. After the death of both Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Kirkwood the property was to go to trustees to be appointed by the presidents of the universities of Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma. "In pro-

viding for the appointment of said university trustees," the will said, "it has been my wish to keep said trust free from political influence or control, and it is my wish that the presidents of these three universities will appoint and continue in such trusteeship only such men as, having superior taste and good business ability, will carefully and conservatively manage the trust estate for the best interests of all concerned." It was characteristic that he should direct that all investments made for the estate must be made in real estate or real estate mortgages, the property to be situated within one hundred miles of Kansas City.

The disposition of The Star itself was of very great concern to Mr. Nelson, and he studied the problem for years. He finally came to the conclusion that the uncertainties of a trusteeship made it inadvisable to attempt to continue the newspaper beyond the lifetime of his family and those who had been associated with him in building it up. He, therefore, put it in charge of his wife and daughter as trustees, with the provision that after their death it was to be disposed of, the proceeds going into the trust fund. The policy of the trustees toward The Star was set forth in

an editorial under the heading, "In His Spirit," signed by Mrs. Nelson and Mrs. Kirkwood after the will was made public. The editorial follows:—

The Star was dedicated by Mr. Nelson to great purposes and high ideals in the service of humanity — to honest elections, to democratic government, to the abolition of special privilege, to fair dealing on the part of public service corporations, to larger opportunities for boys and girls, to progress toward social and industrial justice, to all things that make for the richer, fuller life that he coveted passionately for every man, woman and child.

Particularly was it dedicated to the advancement of Kansas City. Whatever helped the city The Star was for. Whatever hurt the city The Star was against. For thirty-five years this newspaper has warred with all the resources at its command against election thievery, against boss rule, against grasping corporations that came to the town only to make money out of it, against the whole brood of enemies of Kansas City. For thirty-five years it has given its zealous support to every movement for the upbuilding of the city. There has been no citizen, no matter what his station, but has known that if he came forward with a practical, effective plan for the city's benefit, he could count on the heartiest help and cooperation from The Star.

Mr. Nelson never regarded his newspaper as a

commercial proposition. To him it was always a sacred trust.

Those to whom this trusteeship has fallen recognize the heavy responsibility and obligation now theirs. In meeting this responsibility and this obligation they are depending on his associates on the staff who are in complete sympathy with his ideals, and who will have the active management of the paper. It is the one aim of the trustees and associates alike that his spirit shall direct The Star's policies, and that it shall continue to fight, as he would have it fight, for righteousness and justice and the common good, and for the greater, nobler city of his dreams.

CHAPTER XVII

IN CONCLUSION: THE MAN AND HIS WORK

No final estimate can be made at this time of the life and work of William R. Nelson. But it may be worth while to summarize in conclusion the course of his development into the great radical editor, the things he stood for, the methods by which he worked, and the personal impression he made on his associates.

It is an interesting problem why this successful young Hoosier contractor, saturated with Western Nineteenth Century individualism, should have developed into an editor wholly absorbed in community matters, with his energies completely socialized. The solution is to be sought in the natural bent of his temperament in connection with the opportunities that he carved out for himself.

At the time he founded The Star he was evidently well on his way. The tone and make-up of the paper in the first years of his editorship were strikingly like the tone and make-up in the

last years. The influence of Tilden was doubtless effective in directing his attention toward public affairs. But back of everything was a natural insurgency, an instinctive love of fair play, and a general bigness of mental equipment that could not be satisfied with guiding the development of a single life, but that sought its satisfaction in the concerns of men in the mass.

His insurgency, beginning with his attempt to run away from home when a small boy, was a fundamental part of his nature. The established social order was a constant challenge to him. As a youngster in Civil War times he was shocked that men, but not money, should be subject to conscription. "We were ready to step in and force men to give up their lives," he used to say, "but when it came to the money of the capitalists, we came bowing and scraping with our hats under our arms, and offering to pay the highest rate. We were ready to pay the soldiers in greenbacks, but we were almighty careful to pay the bondholders in gold." The supremacy of human rights over property rights became part of his creed.

With these ideas and this energy turned into newspaper channels, it was inevitable that he

should become a powerful champion of thoroughgoing democracy. He really believed in the people. Not that they were always right, but that in the long run they could always be depended on to be right. This belief did not affect his political attitude alone. It permeated his whole business life. He was ready to stake everything on the assumption that the people would support the best newspaper he could possibly publish. It was this confidence that made it possible for him to print in a city of the size of Kansas City a newspaper of the sort that ordinarily could be supported only in a city of a million people.

A slight incident will illustrate his fundamental attitude. Many years ago a presidential aspirant visited Kansas City. Mr. Nelson was one of those invited to meet him in the evening. A crowd gathered outside demanding a speech. Finally the candidate got up to respond. "I suppose I must go out and say something to the 'dear people,'" he said apologetically. Mr. Nelson never got over the contemptuous reference. "It seemed really shocking to me," he said in telling of it years later, "that a man who sought the highest office from the people should refer to them so contemptuously."

Stone bridge over Brush Creek, designed as an example in the war against "tin" bridges

Bound up with his democracy was his passion for the square deal. He had the most whole-souled contempt for the man who desired a special privilege of any sort. That was why the protective tariff stirred his indignation. He could run his business without any help from the Government. Why should the Government help a lot of favored manufacturers? He came to have no patience with franchises for public utilities. What most disgusted him was the fact that such franchises were usually obtained as a speculation and not for the purpose of public service. But in addition he finally concluded that a franchise was a temptation to laziness on the part of the corporation getting it.

"If I owned the Metropolitan Street Railway," he often said, "I would run it just as I try to run The Star. I would n't ask for a franchise. I would simply furnish such good service that the people would always be scared to death for fear I would go out of business."

His restless energy welcomed change. A stagnant society had no charms for him. "A lot of coupon-clippers," he once said, "think there ought to be some form of investment that would be absolutely secure for their children and their chil-

dren's children. But a society that gets to relying on investments for its income will die of dry rot. A great people must constantly be on the alert, ready to take care of themselves. Things ought n't to be too stable. Give the young fellows a chance to show what 's in them. Don't let them get to sitting back and relying on what the old man did." While The Star did not support Bryan in 1896, its editor was never worried over the threat against the monetary standard. Out of turmoil and stress he believed progress would come. The Star constantly cried woe unto them that were at ease in Zion.

It was a striking paradox that a man, known everywhere as a daring radical, a veritable firebrand, should have been so conservative in his methods. He could not tolerate screaming headlines. He steadfastly refused to make The Star a "picture paper." He insisted on good taste in every department. He kept his personality severely in the background. He had supreme confidence in the power of an idea to work itself into the lives of people. As to the form in which the idea was dressed he was comparatively indifferent. Let the idea be presented often enough — "Sneak up on people with it enough times," he would say —

and he knew it would win. "Print one article on commission government," he said at a staff conference, "and nobody will read it. But if every few days there is a little article on commission government, reprinted from Collier's or the Outlook or some other magazine or newspaper, or in the shape of an interview with somebody from a commission government city, or perhaps in a letter from a conscientious reader, or in the editorial — why, by and by a few people here and there will begin to know there is such a thing, and after a few years the city will have commission government without knowing how it got it."

This conservatism in method was the expression of his essential character. He was built on substantiality. He could no more tolerate anything showy or flashy or insincere in his newspaper than he could in his houses or in his own dress. The Star's success must be founded on merit alone. "If we have to give away alarm clocks to get people to take The Star, we 'll go out of business," he would say. It was a maxim with him that "the only justifiable monopoly is the monopoly of excellence." He had absolute faith that excellence would win.

A man with such a temperament might readily have proved a visionary. But he had practical caution in large measure with his daring imagination. It is an unusual combination. He loved to give his imagination free rein. But before time for action came he would give the most careful consideration to what he did. "Hold on," he would say; "maybe somebody can shoot this thing full of holes." And he would give everybody a chance to shoot — until his mind was made up one way or the other. If the negative arguments appealed to him as sound, he would change in a minute, for he was too sure of himself to have any mere pride of opinion. Indeed, he would humorously recognize his right to change his mind. "This is the way I feel now," he would say. "To-morrow I may look at it differently, and if I do I don't know that any of you fellows need remind me of it."

It was natural that a man of this dynamic temperament, of this "demoniacal energy," — to use W. T. Stead's characterization of Gladstone, — would make enemies, and that his character should be misunderstood. His enemies, of whom he had a large assortment, deserve more than a passing mention. They constituted a really important ele-

ment in his life. No man ever had more bitter and more aggressive enemies, and no man ever valued enemies more. To him they seemed a sort of certificate of character. "The most clubs," he would say, "are always lying under the best apple tree." A newspaper that was up to its job, he felt, would constantly be stepping on people's toes and making itself unpopular. Its usefulness would be measured by the number and vigor of men who hated it. The Star made its first group of enemies when it pushed through the park and boulevard system. The system was far ahead of public sentiment, and a large number of persons, smarting under the taxation inevitably involved, became convinced that The Star's editor was an enemy to society. The park system was no sooner out of the way than The Star was busy with other crusades — against spoilsmen and grafters in city and State, against the liquor interests that were controlling politics, and finally against the street-railway company that was seeking to put over an unjust franchise extension. What such a combination of interests is capable of has been demonstrated time and time again in various American cities.

They turned on Mr. Nelson with such a campaign of slander as rarely has fallen to any man. Day after day he was described by political speakers and by newspaper organs of the street-railway company as a blackmailer, a grafter, a boss of the most despicable type. Specific instances were given where he was supposed to have received money corruptly. It was charged that he was an escaped criminal from Indiana. No accusation was too reckless to be brought against him. He paid no attention to the slanders. It is the exact truth that he never saw a copy of the various organs of the street railway that led the gang. "If I paid attention to what other fellows are saying," he would comment, "I might get away from my job and go to answering back." Sometimes his associates would lose their temper and would urge that he bring suit for slander. "What 's the use?" he would reply. "I have lived in this community and published a newspaper here for thirty years. My neighbors in Kansas City know me. If they think I 'm a rascal, a court decision would n't alter their opinion. Besides, I 've got more important things to do. If I should go after all the fellows who 've lied about me, I would be in

court the rest of my natural life." His fundamental distrust of courts perhaps affected his attitude. In a long life he never appeared in court of his own volition. Once when summoned as a juror, the judge asked if he knew any reason why he could not serve impartially on that particular case. "None," he replied, "except my contempt for any man who goes to a court of law to get justice."

To the very last his enemies hoped to "get something on him" somewhere. As the Kansas City field proved barren, they periodically sent searchers back to Indiana — to his vast amusement. On one occasion a group of his bitterest haters found an opportunity to bring a libel suit against him. In Missouri libel suits against important newspapers have been political contests rather than suits at law. It has been a saying that independent newspapers have been tried, not for libel but for treason to the Democratic Party. For the trial of this suit a change of venue was taken to a county that was vehemently hostile to the policies The Star advocated. The leading lawyer for the prosecution had a reputation for reckless invective. He was an habitual Star baiter and had

boasted that when he got The Star's editor on the stand he would "show him up" as a boodler and grafter. At the end of the direct examination Mr. Nelson turned to his attorney: "Don't object to any questions the other side may ask," he said. "My life is an open book. I have absolutely nothing to conceal." And not an impertinent question was put to him. Never was he treated with more consideration than by the blustering lawyer who had been threatening to "tear him to pieces."

His character could have seemed complex and perplexing only to those who had no conception of his aims and aspirations and who measured his motives by the low standard of "What is there in it for me?" Men who were at all familiar with him could predict his attitude and The Star's attitude toward any given problem. Is it right? What is best for Kansas City, or the State or the country? Those were the questions he always put. When a constitutional amendment was proposed, for instance, to take away from newspapers a lot of unnecessary and costly advertising connected with charter elections, a change which would cost The Star thousands of dollars every year, nobody on the staff had a shadow of a doubt

as to what The Star's position would be. It would support the amendment vigorously, of course.

It is an interesting fact that not one of the men who blackguarded him knew him personally, and that no man ever knew him personally without giving him warm admiration and regard.

If he had made it a point to know more persons it is quite possible that his assailants could not have conducted their campaigns of slander so recklessly. But he did not care to spend time away from home or the office. He never frequented clubs. It was his custom to drive directly home from the office, and while he was a delightful host he did not entertain extensively. He was constantly besought to serve on committees and to "sit next the speaker" at dinners to distinguished guests. But he rarely acquiesced. He boasted that he never had been a vice-president of anything or a dummy director in all his life. His natural inclination was backed by a theory that an editor had no business to have friends. They would be apt to influence him away from his line of duty, he thought. The consequence was that most of the people of Kansas City never had seen Mr. Nelson. To them he was a sort of

mythical character. When he consented to attend a luncheon to two Cabinet officers who were canvassing the country on the question of the federal reserve banks, business men flocked over to the club to have the editor of The Star pointed out to them. He always sought to sink his own personality in the newspaper. Until the very latest years no sketch of him had ever appeared in a newspaper or magazine. "It is n't W. R. Nelson that is shooting off his mouth in the paper," he would say; "it 's The Star. I 'd like to give that fellow thunder myself. But I suppose The Star ought to restrain itself."

He had a humorous recognition of those human weaknesses which endeared him to those about him. He was a good hater, and he knew it. On one occasion he invited suggestions from every member of the staff. A reporter handed in one urging that The Star be a little gentler in its treatment of a particularly offensive blackguard. He called the reporter over. "All right, young fellow," he said. "Let 's make a bargain. You forgive my enemies and I 'll forgive yours."

"When I start in on a campaign," he once said, "I think I 'm going to be just as reasonable and

polite as can be. But before long I get so interested that I can't help breaking over and using a club."

As William Allen White said, he "exuded character." "Early in his career in Kansas City he became 'Colonel.' Not that he was ever colonel of anything; he was just Coloneliferous." Personally he was a striking figure. Mr. White spoke of his "general Himalayan effect as he loomed behind a desk." Julian Street, in his travel series for Collier's, described him as more like a volcano than any man he had ever met. "He is even shaped like one," said Mr. Street, "being mountainous in his proportions and also in the way he tapers upward from his vast waist to his snow-capped 'peak.' Even the voice which proceeds from the Colonel's 'crater' is Vesuvian; hoarse, deep, rumbling, strong. When he speaks great natural forces seem to stir, and you hope no eruption will occur while you are near lest the fire from the mountain descend upon you and destroy you."

His feelings, which were so easily aroused, were always under control in his relations with his associates. Men who had been in daily contact with him for thirty years had never known him to lose

his temper toward a member of the staff. All he asked was the assurance that a man was loyal to The Star and was doing his best. Then mistakes were to be forgotten. If he did n't like a piece of work he was perfectly free to say so. But he invariably spoke of the defects in an impersonal sort of way. He never issued an order. His "Don't you think it might be a good scheme to do so and so?" was recognized as the policy of the paper.

His point of view was so original, he brought such a variety of experience and such freshness of suggestion to every problem that members of the staff looked forward with keen interest to the informal conferences he was so fond of.

His conversation was full of piquant, homely phrases. He abominated formal, conventional ways of putting things. "The reason Ingersoll made such a hit in his lectures," he once remarked, "was because when everybody else was using stilted language, he talked in the language of everyday life. His 'honest Injun,' 'cross your heart,' and all that got to people."

He was particularly interested in developing young men. For several years before his death he kept no regular correspondent for The Star in

Washington. "If a man stays in Washington he gets the idea that he is a statesman and not a reporter," he said. "We 'll keep sending our young men on there and bringing them home after a session of Congress. It 's good training for them, and I 'm a whole lot more interested in making newspaper men than in reporting in The Star who got the last Kansas post-office."

It was he who first suggested the organizing of a club to interest itself in the city in order to give young men an opportunity to take a hand in public affairs. This organization became the City Club of Kansas City.

His interest in young men was one phase of his general interest in the future. When he was over seventy, he received pressing invitations from the editors of two leading magazines to write for them a series of reminiscences. "Those fellows must think I 'm getting old," he snorted. "I 'd have them know that to-morrow is what interests me, not yesterday. My nose is to the front." A friend asked him why he would not sit on the platform at a great political meeting in which he was much interested. "So long as I don't show myself," he replied, "I may keep the illusion for the public

that I'm a dashing young blade." To the end he was youthful in his enthusiasms, in his interests, in his whole view of life. Defeat and disappointment never clouded his hope. He was always confident, as some one put it, "that the particular segment of the millennium he sought was just around the corner."

The editor of The Star must be judged, of course, in his public capacity. But to those who were in contact with him his personality was the dominant fact. As his friend, Mr. Epperson, wrote after his death: "He expanded my ideas of the duties of citizenship. Merely to be honest and to believe in the right did not, in his opinion, make a good citizen." Nobody could associate with him without receiving broader vision, higher inspiration, stronger courage. It was not one of the least of his achievements that for scores, perhaps hundreds, of men who worked with him, life was made vastly richer and more worth while; that their attitude and point of view were transformed.

The saying is that no man is a hero to his valet. Ben, his faithful household manager, already referred to, spoke simply to a friend the day after the funeral. "I feel," he said, "that I am

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An un-posed Portrait

an entirely different man from knowing Mr. Nelson."

What The Star family felt was expressed in two editorials that were printed a month before his death, but which he never saw. The first, under the heading, "Unconquerable," appeared while he lay unconscious in an attack from which he rallied: —

The habit of never being whipped, of always keeping up the fight — that is the quality of a great leader. The man who never admits defeat is the man the world has to take into account. Time and again the foes he is fighting may think they have him down. But before they know it he is on his feet sounding the advance.

Such a man moulds events. He helps create the new heavens and the new earth of the prophet's vision.

A mighty force of the universe is the unconquerable soul.

The second, headed "From The Star's Staff," came after the rally when his physician felt he still had a chance of recovering: —

In Mr. Nelson's temporary absence from the office his associates may say a little of what is in their hearts, which they could not say were he on duty.

They have known — every man who ever has worked on The Star has known — the quality of their chief, his high idealism, his soaring vision, his unfaltering courage, his absolute indifference to personal advantage, his passion for the common good, his wonderful devotion to Kansas City.

Those who have had the privilege of daily association with him have known all this. But they could not know how fully the readers of The Star had come to know its editor, although they might have suspected. For The Star is W. R. Nelson.

During the critical days of his illness and since, they have been simply overwhelmed by the expression of love and sympathy and admiration from every quarter — from the washerwoman who stopped with her bundle at the office, to an ex-President of the United States, and to the President himself. Children have written affectionately. Letters and telegrams have come from distinguished men of affairs and from the important editors of the country. Best of all there has been a flood of messages from those good men and women in the everyday walks of life, whose esteem it always has been Mr. Nelson's supreme ambition to deserve and obtain.

It would be impossible for his associates to put in words how deeply they have been touched by this outpouring. They can only guess from their own feeling how heartened Mr. Nelson himself

will be when he is able to read what in times past he has playfully called his "love letters."

These have come in such numbers that a personal reply cannot be made to every one. Perhaps this inadequate statement may serve as an acknowledgment of profound gratitude and appreciation.

To the men who worked with him, Browning's stanza in the "Epilogue," quoted by The Star the day of his death, and repeated by Bishop Mann at the funeral, seemed a literal and accurate description: —

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

APPENDIX

At the time of Mr. Nelson's death several hundred newspapers commented on his career. Excerpts from some of these comments are here printed to indicate how universal was the interest in his life and how profoundly he had affected the thought of editors in every part of the country.

I

NEW YORK CITY

Mr. Nelson was much more than merely a great newspaper man. He was one of the dozen important personalities of his time in America. The liberal and progressive movement which arose in the Middle West between ten and twenty years ago and came to dominate the political and social forces of the period centered largely around The Kansas City Star and the other forces of public opinion which took their leadership from The Star.

It was not merely that Mr. Nelson, through his paper, gave these forces and leaders the vehicle for expression which was essential to their existence. Mr. Nelson did much more and was much more. He was himself a pioneer in thought and original source, so to speak, of ideas in public affairs which stood the test of discussion and later came to constitute to a large degree the public opinion of the time. There are not in any one generation more than twenty such effective foundations of thought, and Mr. Nelson was decidedly one of the most forceful of his time. It was this aspect of Mr. Nelson that most interested me. Others no doubt will discuss him as a professional newspaper man. I hope the occasion will not pass without some one pointing out that just as he leaves the world the newspapers of the country generally are eating the dust and ashes of a period of wild and shrieking aberrations in appearance and style and are coming

back to the sobriety, dignity, and stability which The Star and only half a dozen other American newspapers have maintained serenely against the temptation to imitate yellowness and over-emphasis. — Mark Sullivan, Editor of *Collier's Weekly*, *New York*.

Colonel William R. Nelson did not wait for others to set fashions. He began things himself. For more than thirty years he made The Kansas City Star a force, a leader, a help. He feared nobody. The forces and trenches of money and society found him undismayed. And he was hard-headed about it. His specialty was not hot air. The causes for which he contended were immediate, concrete. He dealt not in isms, but in the next hard-fought step ahead. He never faltered. He was big, strong and sure. The Kansas City Star has been the most powerful journal of light between the Mississippi and the Pacific, and Colonel Nelson was The Star. — *Harper's Weekly*, *New York*.

Mr. Nelson stood sincerely, and without a trace of cant or an offensive superiority, for public welfare; he never could be accused of working for personal cliques, special interest, or self-seeking partisanship. — *The Outlook*, *New York*.

William Rockhill Nelson was a Titan among the newspapermen of America. In the largest sense he was mindful of the responsibility of his position. His contempt for the editorial pander was limitless. He gave no heed to popular clamor, if it represented a temporary emotion

opposed to his conviction of enduring good. He was quite willing to find himself in a minority, or, indeed, to subject himself to widespread criticism, if he felt himself in the right. He had no care for the comfort of living at peace with his neighbors, if it meant that he could not live at peace with himself. He was a dauntless soldier for the public welfare. As one who knew him intimately for more than a quarter of a century, who enjoyed his confidence, listened to his hopes and fears, and was stimulated by his unwavering devotion to duty, when, all the while, there was neither bluster nor parade in anything he did, but only a set jaw, a quiet defiance of rascality, and a persistent contest against corroding conservatism, I regard his passing as a supreme public calamity. For there is none quite like him left in the newspaper field to-day. — Melville E. Stone, General Manager of the Associated Press, in the *Editor and Publisher*, *New York*.

In his death the country has lost an eminent and noble citizen and journalism one of the best exemplars of the right kind of independence, courage, ability, and enterprise. — *The Times*, *New York*.

William Rockhill Nelson, who died in Kansas City yesterday, was its most notable and useful citizen, a man and a journalist of inexhaustible energy, industry, and public spirit. Kansas City has lost more than a man. It has lost an institution. — *The Sun*, *New York*.

His high idealism, his keen vision, his unfaltering courage, his indifference to personal advantage, his pas-

sion for the common good — all these qualities combined to endear him to hundreds of thousands of his fellow-citizens. — *The Globe, New York.*

To make a great business success of a newspaper enterprise, not by hunting for all possible ways of tickling the public palate, but by the aggressive and consistent pursuit of a clearly formed purpose, and by the assertion of a powerful and rugged personality — this is a rare achievement, and this is what Mr. Nelson accomplished. In such a record as Nelson's, Americans may take genuine pride. — *The Evening Post, New York.*

William R. Nelson, of The Kansas City Star, was one of the ablest and most aggressive journalists of his day. He built up a newspaper with a personality; one that could not be omitted from the list of American journals of the first rank in character and influence. — *The World, New York.*

He brought The Star such originality and ability that he made it one of the great newspapers of the United States. — *The Tribune, New York.*

William R. Nelson died having the love and respect of thousands of folks in his home town and elsewhere. — *The Standard Union, Brooklyn, New York.*

William R. Nelson, who died yesterday morning, was the "father of Kansas City." — *The Morning Telegraph, New York.*

It is a loss to citizenship and to journalism throughout the entire country, a fact which President Wilson promptly recognized in his message of sympathy addressed to Mrs. Nelson. — *The Eagle, Brooklyn.*

He was a leader in every move taken in his time to improve newspapers. — *The Fourth Estate, New York.*

The passing of such a vigorous, aggressive and public-spirited personality as Colonel Nelson is a serious loss to journalism because men of his type are already too few in number. — *The Editor and Publisher, New York.*

W. R. Nelson was known from the Atlantic to the Pacific as one of America's big lights in the newspaper business. The Kansas City Star has been referred to as one of the three exemplary newspapers of America. — *Newspaperdom, New York.*

In the conception, development, and management of The Star, Mr. Nelson held to, clung to, and as nearly attained to the highest ideals as it is given to mortals to attain them. — *The Literary Digest, New York.*

II

THE EAST

The Kansas City Star, as conceived and developed by Colonel Nelson, became a national newspaper with a definite purpose in life, and a soul patterned after that of the aggressive thinker and fighter who stood sponsor for it during the creative period of commercial, industrial, and political awakening in the Plains States. — *The Transcript*, *Boston*.

Mr. Nelson's creed was independence and public service applied to a newspaper that should be of interest to the people. He made The Star a power because he inspired confidence in its professions and its accomplishments. He used that power not for his own aggrandizement, but for the bettering of the city and state in which he lived. — *The Post*, *Boston*.

William R. Nelson was Kansas City's greatest asset. — *The Journal*, *Boston*.

He devoted The Star primarily to works of upbuilding and of reform in Kansas City. — *The Republican, Springfield*, *Massachusetts*.

Only a man of exceptional resources, physical and mental, could have set to his credit such a manifold record

of good works. He was a great editor and a splendid example of Americanism. The influence of his prodigious endeavor will long be felt. — *The Union, Springfield, Massachusetts.*

He was public-spirited and fearless, and there is no measuring the reach of his great and righteous influence. — *The Courant, Hartford, Connecticut.*

American journalism loses one of its most notable personalities in the death of William R. Nelson. — *The Daily Eastern Argus, Portland, Maine.*

Certain newspapers in this country set a standard imperturbably above the dollar mark, and The Kansas City Star, under Colonel William Rockhill Nelson's editorship, has been one of them. — *The Ledger, Philadelphia.*

The Star was the concrete expression of patriotic impulse, broad humanness, and intense interest in the welfare of his neighbors, his fellow-citizens, and the people of the country at large. — *The Bulletin, Philadelphia.*

Only a great man, clear-headed and devoted to the welfare of his neighbors, could edit an inland newspaper so brilliantly as to make it famous throughout the United States. William R. Nelson did that. — *The Telegraph, Philadelphia.*

He and his newspaper constituted a most energetic force for development and betterment of the Missouri

city that it was his pride to beautify. — *The Post, Pittsburgh.*

It is notable that his last editorial conference was held in his sick room and had for its subject the keeping up of the fight for honest elections, which he recognized he might not live to see won, but which was, he declared, fundamental for honest government. — *The Dispatch, Pittsburgh.*

William R. Nelson was a national figure in journalism; to our mind the greatest figure. And we knew him only from what he made — only from his newspaper. The innate nobility of the man shone out from the pages of it. He made The Star an instrument of public service. He was no preacher; he was a crusader. And truth rode at his side. — *The Journal, Niagara Falls, New York.*

For thirty-five years he saw his duty to be the people's spokesman, and fulfilled that duty with greater success than any other man of his time. — *The News, Buffalo, New York.*

In truth, he was, for more than a generation, a shining credit to his profession as well as a public benefactor who utilized his vast opportunities with splendid efficacy to elevate political life and improve social conditions throughout the broad territory served by his newspapers. — *The Herald, Syracuse, New York.*

William R. Nelson was a man of high ideals. — *The Times, Troy, New York.*

Lionlike is the word that best describes him. Bitterly hated by his enemies and devotedly loved by his friends, he fought for the right as he saw it with a courage, a force and ability that were irresistible. A great, bold, warm-hearted, red-blooded, iron-willed man — his death is a loss to his State and to his Nation, and it will be a long time, if ever, before another Nelson rises up in the Missouri Valley. — *The Sun, Baltimore, Maryland.*

His newspaper and what he has done through it are a monument of which any man might be proud. — *The News, Baltimore, Maryland.*

A good, clean fighter has been removed from the arena in the death of William Rockhill Nelson, owner of The Kansas City Star, and one of the ablest editors in the country. — *The Post, Washington.*

He was for high civic ideals and was a power for good. —*The Star, Washington.*

He leaves the impress of his aspirations upon the whole great community where that newspaper circulated. —*The Times, Washington.*

III

THE MIDDLE WEST

He was a sturdy fighter for a greater and more beautiful Kansas City — for a Kansas City that would mean something more than just money-making. He was beaten time after time — but he fought on. It became a saying in his own town that you could n't really beat "Bill" Nelson; he "never knew when he was licked!" Compromise with any power he regarded as evil was for him simply unthinkable.

He was a big man — mentally and physically. He died "a happy warrior," thankful for "a long life, with great opportunities for usefulness," and regretting only that he "had not accomplished more." Peace to his ashes; honor to his memory! — *The Herald, Chicago.*

Of course, The Star was William R. Nelson. With the rugged old man, friend of presidents and bootblacks, gone out of it, what will it be? There is something of importance to America in the question. That it should be so is Colonel Nelson's finest tribute. — *The Post, Chicago.*

In the death of Colonel W. R. Nelson at Kansas City yesterday, Fort Wayne feels the loss as deeply as though he was still a resident of this city. Colonel Nelson was a Fort Wayne product, and naturally Fort Wayne has

always taken a deep interest in his career. Furthermore, the city has always felt as though he still belonged here, as though his residence in Kansas City was merely that of a transient. Aside from the sorrow felt at the death of Colonel Nelson because of its local significance, his death takes from journalism one of the most unique figures in the world. Colonel Nelson was a pugnacious fighter. He continually fought for the betterment of Kansas City, for better newspaper ideals, and for purity in politics. As a fighter he naturally made many bitter enemies, but in his death enemies and friends alike will unite in declaring that his work has left a deep and abiding impression on Kansas City, the Southwest, and the country, and that the sum total of this impression has been and will continue to be of tremendous worth. — *The News, Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

The death of William Rockhill Nelson, while it removes from the newspaper world one of its most commanding figures, has a peculiar local interest because of the fact that Fort Wayne was the birthplace and scene of the early endeavors of Mr. Nelson.

Colonel Nelson was of a family whose pioneer history was closely interwoven with the history of Fort Wayne, and to which Fort Wayne owes much of its early progress and the sound, conservative foundation upon which its present greatness rests.

So while for many years Colonel Nelson had been away from Fort Wayne, the ties of kinship and warm friendship bound closely and his career was watched with the closest interest and feeling of actual pride. It is

not too much to say that Colonel Nelson's influence for the elevation of newspaper standards has been more marked than that of any one man in the history of the press of the Nation. Colonel Nelson was ever champion of the right, the implacable foe of that which was selfish and narrow. He paid blind obedience to no man, no party, but convinced that men and measures were for the best and were conceived in purity of spirit and motive, he supported them as fervently and forcefully as he fought the wrong.

The Nation will long feel the loss of Colonel Nelson's commanding personality, his warm heart, and his fearless championship of the right. — *The Journal-Gazette, Fort Wayne, Indiana.*

To Mr. Nelson, perhaps, more than to any other single individual, is due the phenomenal progress Kansas City has made. — *The Daily Pantagraph, Bloomington, Illinois.*

Mr. Nelson was a man of fine character and strong convictions and was possessed of a public spirit and courage that led him fearlessly to promote reforms in the people's interest in the face of powerful antagonism. — *The Star, Indianapolis, Indiana.*

The death of William R. Nelson will be mourned by many people outside the Missouri River territory. — *The News, Indianapolis, Indiana.*

The Jews of the entire country owe a debt of gratitude to his memory for the fairness, freedom from

prejudice, and friendliness with which The Star was conducted. — *The American Israelite, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

The death of William R. Nelson means a loss to journalism, for a spirit has flown which, though redolent of the pioneer West, acknowledged no geographical limits to its Americanism. — *The Plain Dealer, Cleveland, Ohio.*

There is not a newspaper in the United States that is not paying tribute this week to the memory of William R. Nelson. — *The Daily News, Dayton, Ohio.*

His fearlessness, his ideals, his forcefulness, his clearness moulded public thought. — *The Free Press, Detroit, Michigan.*

This militant newspaper was a distinct commercial asset to Kansas City. It energized the community. — *The Journal, Detroit, Michigan.*

No great success is won without great faith in the work. At almost any time within the last twenty years Colonel Nelson might have had high diplomatic position, but his answer was that as head of his newspaper he held a higher position than the President or even the electorate could confer upon him. From so great a faith in his calling, so great a determination to keep faith with that calling, he won the success, which meant, after all, but the opportunity for greater service. — *The Journal, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

He seemed to appreciate more than most of his contemporaries the educational function of a newspaper

and this feature he constantly promoted. When it seemed to him that the machinery of common justice was yielding to class pressure or to reactionary prejudice, he slammed it as fearlessly as he would have denounced a tin-horn gambler, regardless of the peril of punishment for contempt. — *The News, Detroit, Michigan.*

His passing removes one of the most notable figures in American journalism, and one of the most influential factors in American social and civic life. — *The Evening News, Battle Creek, Michigan.*

The work Mr. Nelson did for the development of the West was not confined to his chosen city, and its fruits will be shared for all time to come by the people of the whole Trans-Mississippi country. — *The Bee, Omaha, Nebraska.*

In his death the newspaper fraternity lost one of its ablest men. — *The Daily News, Nebraska City, Nebraska.*

He did his duty as a newspaper editor, as a citizen, as a promoter of the common good. — *The Daily Press, Nebraska City, Nebraska.*

Let us hope that the influence of William R. Nelson will live. — *The State Journal, Lincoln, Nebraska.*

He was the uncompromising foe of all forms of public graft. — *The Capital, Des Moines, Iowa.*

Mr. Nelson was one of the great men of Missouri at a time when a great man could leave his mark. The Star may go up or down, now that he is gone, but Kansas City will be his monument. — *The Register and Leader*, *Des Moines*, *Iowa*.

He did much toward the beautification of Kansas City, which metropolis realizes that its great debt to its foremost editor never could have been paid. — *The Gazette*, *Cedar Rapids*, *Iowa*.

Kansas City is his monument, for to the late editor more than any other influence Kansas City owes its growth and civic beauty. — *The Times-Journal*, *Dubuque*, *Iowa*.

Colonel Nelson was a firm believer in the theory that a newspaper should stand for ideals. — *The Daily Nonpareil*, *Council Bluffs*, *Iowa*.

He was always fighting for the masses. — *The Tribune*, *Sioux City*, *Iowa*.

The world will long regret his departure, while cherishing his memory with respect and esteem. — *The Journal*, *Clarinda*, *Iowa*.

Kansas City grew with The Star, and The Star with Kansas City. Mr. Nelson was a man of vision. Thirty-five years ago he foresaw that the ragged river town, stuck high on steep hills, was destined to be one of the metropolises of the West. Nor was his a faith without good works. From the beginning, through The Star, he preached the gospel of civic improve-

ment. He not only preached improvements, but he made them. To no one man, perhaps, is Kansas City under deeper obligation for what has been accomplished in the way of making it a City Beautiful. He was for Kansas City first, last, and always. It was Kansas City that made him, and he was duly grateful. — *The Journal, Sioux City, Iowa.*

No other individual figure within the last twenty years has stood out so prominently in the newspaper world as has Colonel William R. Nelson, of the Kansas City, Missouri, Star and Times. Few if any men have left deeper or more admirable impressions on American journalism as a whole than has Colonel Nelson. — *The Herald, Duluth, Minnesota.*

And all that is left for the commentator to say is that Colonel Nelson taught us, his countrymen, his fellow-workers, that a great spirit may free itself from the temptations of wealth and of ambition to use that wealth for a high moral purpose, to forego the conventional ambition of titular honor for the more godlike aspiration of fighting the battles of right as a common citizen. — *The Dispatch, St. Paul, Minnesota.*

Colonel Nelson embodied the spirit of the West, the spirit of achievement. His was a restless energy that always sought out some project or movement or reform upon which to expend itself. — *The Journal, Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

The newspaper world lost one of its greatest and best men in the death of Editor Nelson. — *The Dakota Herald, Yankton, South Dakota.*

IV

THE SOUTH

The Star was an independent. It could not be bought or bullied. It took orders from nowhere. It knew only what its editor conceived the public welfare. — *The Courier-Journal, Louisville, Kentucky.*

He was a sane, virile, healthful personality. For sham and pretense and the false howlings of the demagogue he had as much contempt as he had hatred for the attempted oppression of corporate wealth or political power. He was a big-hearted, big-brained man, who made his influence felt, not alone in his own community and the territory his paper served, but throughout the country. — *The Times-Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia.*

W. R. Nelson was one of the builders. His city ideal was that of parks and homes. His was the idea that Kansas City should become the place for people with state and nation-wide interests to select for a home. Parks and more parks, the city beautiful, the city clean, in morals and politics and health, the unselfish city, the city of civic spirit, of vision, of full confidence in its future greatness, in its destiny to become one of the really beautiful cities of the world, these were the daily ideals of the Kansas City Times and Star. — *The Herald, Lexington, Kentucky.*

William R. Nelson endowed Kansas City with his genius for construction. He planned for the city things it thought impossible of construction, and then hammered away at the people until they made them come true. From the first he worked on the idea, "Make Kansas City a good place to live in." In effect he said: "If you want to make Kansas City a great city, you must make it pleasant to live in, otherwise people will sojourn, not abide."

To this end he attacked anything and everything that tended to retard the city; grasping corporations, crooked political bosses, greedy public-utility companies, public apathy to radical changes, inartistic and crude thoughts and methods of expression in every direction. He did it with a vigor that made him bitter and implacable enemies. But it also gained him the support and friendship of the great public. Also, he never deviated from his ambition to publish the best newspaper possible, and the ablest critics and judges of newspapers in the country, the great reading public, told him that he was doing it. — *The Journal*, *Shreveport*, *Louisiana*.

Mr. Nelson was an upstanding figure in the public life of America — independent, fearless, aggressive, and progressive. — *The Item*, *New Orleans*, *Louisiana*.

William R. Nelson of Kansas City was a man of great force, uncompromising integrity, and an energy that knew no faltering or exhaustion. He was of the West, as though to the manner born. He partook of its spirit and enthusiastic progressiveness, and he soon be-

came the dominating influence in his city, which is one of the liveliest in the Middle West. — *The News-Scimitar, Memphis, Tennessee.*

He made The Star the best newspaper in the West. — *The Tennessean, Nashville, Tennessee.*

Colonel Nelson set the pace for independence in thought and action in the newspaper realm. He was the foe to all that was evil; the champion of all that was good. — *The Banner, Nashville, Tennessee.*

Nelson edited The Star after such a virile and vigorous fashion that he invariably incurred strong opposition, but his honest candor commanded respect. — *The News, Elizabethtown, Kentucky.*

His paper, The Star, was a live voice of a live community. — *The Register, Mobile, Alabama.*

Mr. Nelson, editor and owner of The Kansas City Star, who died recently, was said to have had many enemies. People who do things usually have enemies. — *The Age-Herald, Birmingham, Alabama.*

Kansas City mourns the death of its most useful citizen, and newspapers throughout the United States honor the memory of the man who aimed so high and labored so well in their calling. — *The Journal, Atlanta, Georgia.*

He used The Star to fight humanity's battles. — *The Constitution, Atlanta, Georgia.*

His paper was always fighting the battles of the people. — *The Herald, Augusta, Georgia.*

He did not spare himself, either his mind or his pocket, in making Kansas City a better place in which to live. — *The News, Savannah, Georgia.*

Commercial clubs, lawyers, editors, reporters, governors, authors, clergymen of all denominations, judges, and senators have written and spoken tributes to his worth and high character, and all the good that has been said of him has met responsive approbation in the hearts of thousands who have known him personally and through his great newspaper, The Kansas City Star. — *The News, Lawton, Oklahoma.*

The tribute of faithful service is the dearest one that lies upon the bier of W. R. Nelson, put there by men who were his associates in fact and in spirit. — *The Times, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.*

He made a wonderful newspaper and has left the impress of his personality, not only on the city which was his home, but throughout a wide area of tributary territory, if not on the Nation as a whole. — *The World, Tulsa, Oklahoma.*

The most valuable heritage that Mr. Nelson has left are the battles he has won for intelligence and public rectitude. — *The News-Capital, McAlester, Oklahoma.*

Mr. Nelson was a huge force for good. — *The Daily Leader, Guthrie, Oklahoma.*

Mr. Nelson did more than any other editor to purify the newspapers of this country. — *The Leader, Frederick, Oklahoma.*

The name of Nelson stands out as that of the greatest of the great among those who made the American press a powerful influence in directing the currents of social and political progress. — *The Express, Chickasha, Oklahoma.*

He made The Star one of the real newspapers of the continent. — *The Times-Record, Blackwell, Oklahoma.*

He was great as a publisher and editor, but greater as a man. — *The Examiner, Bartlesville, Oklahoma.*

He was the most effective worker in the battle for better things that has ever filled the editorial chair in the Nation. — *The Record, Yale, Oklahoma.*

He opposed the corrupt and pointed out the better way. — *The Adair County Republican, Stilwell, Oklahoma.*

Not only does Kansas City mourn his loss, but the entire country is in sorrow at the loss of so good a man. — *The Monitor, Shattuck, Oklahoma.*

There will be men in Kansas City who will secretly rejoice that a great obstacle has been removed from their pathway to riches, but the great Middle West, whose development and prosperity built on the soil is typified

in Nelson's life and in The Star, will spend this day considering the vacancy in the seats of the mighty who are also good. — *The Herald*, *Sapulpa*, *Oklahoma*.

He was a noted editor and political reformer. — *The Free Press*, *Kingfisher*, *Oklahoma*.

Mr. Nelson worked to further that righteousness that exalted a nation. — *The Herald*, *Guymon*, *Oklahoma*.

He made The Star not only a great newspaper, but a powerful one. — *The Morning News*, *Dallas*, *Texas*.

He created The Kansas City Star and it is a creation worth while. — *The Star-Telegram*, *Fort Worth*, *Texas*.

He made Kansas City a good place to live in. — *The Journal*, *Beaumont*, *Texas*.

Colonel Nelson was more than an ordinary publisher. The Star was and is more than an ordinary newspaper — it is a teacher, a leader, a developer, and a community guide to better things in all the essentials of life. — *The Daily Panhandle*, *Amarillo*, *Texas*.

There is a line in Revelation: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," that, without fulsomeness or straining, may be set down as a tribute to the passing of William R. Nelson, editor and publisher of The Kansas City Star. — *The Express*, *San Antonio*, *Texas*.

He was one of the most successful and powerful editors this country has ever known. — *The Daily News, Galveston, Texas.*

His dying message should be cherished in every part of the American Nation. "Honest elections," he said, "are fundamental to a democratic government." — *The Tribune, Galveston, Texas.*

The selection of the name of The Mena Star was the result of association, and the ideals of the greater paper have served as a guiding light to the smaller. We know of no higher standard. — *The Star, Mena, Arkansas.*

Mr. Nelson believed that a newspaper should be held by an individual as trustee for the public. — *The Gazette, Little Rock, Arkansas.*

He was a great man, a great editor, a gentleman, and a scholar. He made Kansas City as much as Kansas City made him. — *The Daily Register, Siloam Springs, Arkansas.*

V

THE MOUNTAINS AND THE PACIFIC COAST

There died, in the early hours of Tuesday morning, April 13, at his home in Kansas City, William R. Nelson, the founder and editor of The Kansas City Star and one of the really great men of the Nation. In the same hour there passed into the vast silence in his person one of the kindliest and most lovable of men. His mind was profound, practical, and intensely alert. His judgment was keen, sagacious, and exact. His heart was a fountain of generosity. No worthy appeal ever was made to him in vain. Not often did what was worthy need wait upon appeal.

Seated in a place of power that had been fashioned by his own endeavor, he used that power nobly. His was the faculty of vision — the gift of seeing in the time that is the things that should be, and in fullest measure his was the courage to attempt the transformation of the vision into the real and tangible. Kansas City owes much of what it is to the constructive labors of its builder, who there lies dead. His creative force was the city's greatest asset. When reaction defeated progress, he remained undaunted. Nothing could stifle his faith in the town or its people — nothing could shake his conviction that in the long run right must triumph over wrong because it was right, as good ultimately must conquer evil because of its inherent quality.

As with the city, so with the State and the Nation. Not for him the bondage of partisanship. He kept himself as free as freedom, rendering joyous service under whatever flag at the time offered the largest hope for the people's good. For W. R. Nelson, big-brained, big-hearted man that he was, never seeking personal advantage, fought with his whole might to help democracy assert its powers and defend its rights. In that contest, continuing through all his journalistic years, he opposed the efforts of plutocracy to control government. He fought all manner of powerful interests seeking special privileges at the public cost. They looked alike to him — he fought them all.

So, under his immediate and personal direction, The Kansas City Star became one of the foremost newspapers of the Republic. It was managed and edited, as he was fond of emphasizing on occasion, in the interest and for the benefit of the men and women who subscribed ten cents a week toward its support, but it was no less, and no less will it remain, the champion of all that makes for the betterment of conditions throughout the whole Nation — the strongest single militant force of which the cause of social and industrial justice can boast. Living, Nelson was the life of the paper; dead, he becomes its ruling spirit. The Kansas City Star, the work of his brain and heart, is his enduring monument.

It is not easy in this hour of Nelson's going adequately to express the sense of loss, deep and abiding, his death creates. No man ever was in intimate relation with him who did not come to feel great personal affection for him, so that, whatever the length of separation that came to

break association, the world seemed yet a better place to live in because he was in it.

Good-night, old friend, now that darkness has fallen and you sleep — good-night till comes the morrow. — Albert Miller, in the *Los Angeles Express*.

The career of such a man is invaluable in the impress it leaves upon his age. — *The Oregon Journal*, *Portland*, *Oregon*.

What The Star was, he made it; and what Kansas City is may be credited in considerable measure to him. — *The Morning Oregonian*, *Portland*, *Oregon*.

In many hard struggles, both local and national, The Bulletin has been strengthened and encouraged by the unhesitating support of William R. Nelson. — *The Bulletin*, *San Francisco*.

Mr. Nelson was a big man and one who won out by superior mentality coupled with tireless energy. — *The Chronicle*, *San Francisco*.

He was an honest, kindly, generous, lovable man. Those who worked under him fairly worshipped him. All Kansas City loved him, for he had done much through The Star and through himself to make life better worth the living in that city and in its vicinity. — *The Bee*, *Sacramento*, *California*.

Even at this distance the force and influence of William R. Nelson have made themselves felt. — *The Herald*, *Fresno*, *California*.

Let all the Nation pray that God may send us more men like William R. Nelson. — *The Messenger, Monrovia, California.*

Mr. Nelson was one of the best known editors in the world, and the Kansas City Star was recognized as one of the leading newspapers. — *The Labor Leader, San Diego, California.*

With the passing of William Rockhill Nelson from the theater of action at Kansas City there went out from life one of the strongest personalities that has dominated human events in the last half-century. — *The State Leader, Cheyenne, Wyoming.*

Missouri has never harbored a greater nor a truer citizen, and as long as his great newspaper shall continue in his footsteps his name will be a household word wherever the English tongue is spoken. — *The Montana Progressive, Helena, Montana.*

He operated his papers for the public and in the interest of the community's welfare. — *The Spokesman-Review, Spokane, Washington.*

Throughout the Mississippi Valley William R. Nelson's genius left a mighty impress. — *The Daily Herald, Everett, Washington.*

All in all, he was, in the opinion of this paper, the greatest man of his profession this country has yet produced. — *The Daily Republic, North Yakima, Washington.*

He was sincere and honest — and greater praise few men deserve. — *The Tonopah Miner*, *Tonopah*, *Nevada*.

His death marks the passing of a great soul. — *The Examiner*, *Ogden*, *Utah*.

Editor Nelson's paper prospered because the masses believed in its sincerity. — *Salt Lake Telegram*, *Salt Lake City*, *Utah*.

As an influence for better citizenship and better journalism he stood foremost in the Middle West. His example has meant much, and will continue to mean much, to the Nation. — *The Gazette*, *Colorado Springs*, *Colorado*.

Mr. Nelson constantly appealed to what was best in men and women. — *The Arizona Republican*, *Phœnix*, *Arizona*.

William R. Nelson was the most noted editor of all the West and one of the positive personal forces of the United States. — *The Morning Journal*, *Albuquerque*, *New Mexico*.

VI

KANSAS

The life of the man, who for a third of a century has been the guiding force behind that great newspaper, will have its full and undiminished expression on this earth long after his mere name is remembered only by those who loved him. Thousands who never knew his name will be moved by the force of his purpose. Events still gestating in the future will be shaped by the life that has gone out. For he lived largely. He was of giant size. He was one of the few men of genuine power that the Middle West has produced. Mr. Nelson was of the militant type, "always a fighter," yet never did his passions guide him. He had a serene and dependable sense of justice, and this sense moved him in all major affairs of his life. When he took a position, it was tenable, not only the day he took it, but ever after. He saw far because he saw justly. Yesterday's fights never rose to defeat to-day's, because yesterday's fight was righteous. That is genius.

But he had more than genius—he had a sweet and beautiful soul, filled with a love for men, a passion for the welfare of humanity. That was the motive of his life. Such a life, when it is expressed through a strong medium, is vastly immortal. It cannot die, no matter what happens to the body or the soul after death. And

the expression of Mr. Nelson's soul took the form most useful for his time.

In Michael Angelo's day he would have been a great artist in stone or oils. In the time of wars he would have been a soldier. In Elizabeth's England he would been a poet. In Rome he would have been a tribune. In Greece he would have stood with the philosophers. But to-day his life dramatized itself in a newspaper. Paper soon crumbles. The Kansas City Star was printed for the hour it left the press. Its future and its fate are of no great consequence. But it is of first importance to this generation and to the next in this world that there lived and wrought here, with tools of ink and paper, a fine, free soul with a trained mind, who fashioned out of the world about him every day he lived the reality of a great dream of democracy. — William Allen White, in *The Gazette, Emporia, Kansas.*

There is a territory comprising all of some and the greater part of several other States that come under the trade and civic influence of Kansas City for which no man has ever done as much as Colonel W. R. Nelson, publisher of the Kansas City Star, who died this morning. In all this territory the moral standards have been raised, the civic spirit has been promoted, and business prosperity has in a measure come through the activities of this one man. No other man could have done the work. He was one of the conspicuous characters whom Providence occasionally raises up in a country or in a community and gives a vision for a certain needful or helpful service and endows with the talents and the force to execute it.

The seed of courage that this man has sown, the high purposes which he has inspired, the force he has imparted to others, will never die. Though his earthly tabernacle be untenanted, Colonel Nelson lives in some measure incarnate in the lives of others who have come under the touch of his masterful and purposeful life. What he has left to the young men in the profession is greater than riches of gold; the legacy he has left to hundreds of communities is more than worldly prosperity. His lesson is written not with ink, not on tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the hearts of thousands whom his life impressed. — *The Tribune, Fort Scott, Kansas.*

William Rockhill Nelson is a force in the life of the Southwest. He was a master-builder, and his work remains firm, trustworthy, stone upon stone in perfect form. He lifted the life around him, the life of communities and States, and kept it to the level of his superb manhood. No worthier praise can be written of the citizen-builder whose ongoing we are called to note, not with grief and cypress wreaths, but with love, admiration, and gratitude; not with sorrow, but with fair memories, and the up-springing Hope that all will be well with his new work. God-speed, old friend. — *The Eagle, Wichita, Kansas.*

Threats by opponents or appeals to self-interest never swerved him from what he thought was right. He was never asking what would be policy or what would be the best way out. All he wanted to know was what was right, and when he made up his mind on that point no

blandishments of friends or battering by foe ever did more than make him more determined than before to beat down the wrong and build up the right. — *The News, Hutchinson, Kansas.*

His death seems personal to those of us who have followed him daily for twenty-five years and more, and especially so to me as an editor, for I count his publication the greatest newspaper in the world and his influence for human good in recent years equal to, if not greater, than that of any other American. His work has been an inspiration to every forward-looking editor within the territory he served. It has made grafting more difficult in every city, county, and state government within hundreds of miles. It has made easier the work of every preacher, teacher, and editor within the reach of his mighty influence. It has helped to mould and ennoble the characters of thousands. — *The News, Wellington, Kansas.*

The writer has lived twenty-seven years under the influence of the Kansas City Star. Fifteen of these years he has been a constant reader of its columns. He has walked the fields, he has roamed through college halls, he has camped in musty churches, and all of these have stamped themselves upon his life. But as he sums up the contributing influences toward his present self today, excepting the home alone, he feels the Kansas City Star has been the dominating influence in his life. The Great Chief, whose philosophy we have tried to follow, whose opinion of right and justice as far as we are able

to comprehend it has become our own, whose valiant fight for the common people and the general good has set up for us a new hero, is gone. With thousands of the men and women in the great Middle West who have had a personal acquaintance with Mr. Nelson, yet have never seen him, we feel a personal loss. — *The Republican, Anthony, Kansas.*

This layman wants to lay his flower on the bier of William R. Nelson. The person who has been in the newspaper business in this section for the last twenty years knows that Mr. Nelson and his Kansas City Star have done more to elevate the profession and put it on a high plane than any other factor. The Star taught the small fellows to play the game square from a business standpoint. It taught them to hew to the line and express their honest convictions. It taught them to print the news and tell the truth and not depend on public pap for a living. That is why there are more good country newspapers in the Kansas City territory than in any other territory of like area in the world. — *The Osborne Farmer, Osborne, Kansas.*

Always a builder, he wrought much in the lives and hearts of the thousands who have followed his paper for thirty years.— *The Daily Reporter, Independence, Kansas.*

He was the biggest single asset in the West for the advancement of good government and the betterment of conditions of the under dog. — *The Star, Independence, Kansas.*

All worthy public enterprises and all causes based on human need have lost a powerful friend and champion in the death of W. R. Nelson. — *The Republican, Jewell City, Kansas.*

The whole country mourns the loss of one of our great and good men. — *The Post, Carbondale, Kansas.*

There was no greater man in the Central West than Colonel Nelson. — *The Star, Conway Springs, Kansas.*

He was intolerant of all evil and vice, and his life-work — The Star — has been the means of building up a finer citizenship in these Western States. — *The Mercury, Manhattan, Kansas.*

William R. Nelson was a warrior, fighting for the best interests of the people. — *The Democrat, Manhattan, Kansas.*

He won the enmity of every grafter and boodler in Kansas City and the encomiums of the very best people in that community. — *The Journal, Dodge City, Kansas.*

Mr. Nelson has unquestionably been one of the big instruments to assist in the upbuilding of the West in general and Kansas in particular. — *The Reporter, Le Roy, Kansas.*

The people mourn a great man and a firm friend gone. — *The Journal, Yates Center, Kansas.*

William R. Nelson was always for upbuilding and for the exposure of all fraud and crooked work. — *The News-Courant, Strong City, Kansas.*

William R. Nelson needs no shaft of granite or marble to perpetuate his memory. The present and future generations of Kansas will keep his memory green as they enjoy the beautiful parks and boulevards that are really the creations of his far-seeing mind. — *The Mirror, Olathe, Kansas.*

Mr. Nelson was first, last, and all the time a fighting man, and it is accorded him as having been uniformly on the side of right and justice. — *The Independent, Olathe, Kansas.*

The voluntary expressions of love and respect that have come from every source since his death show conclusively where he stood with the great mass of people. They believed in him and they believed in his work. And the seed that he has sown will flower after him. — *The Register, Olathe, Kansas.*

William R. Nelson is dead, but what he stood for and did will live for another generation. In his death every newspaper man in Kansas has lost a guiding spirit, and whether we knew him or not, a real friend. — *The Free Press, Osage City, Kansas.*

Colonel Nelson was a mountain of energy, a courageous fighter for the principles of right, conscientious

to a fault, immeasurably successful, charitable to the utmost. — *The Free Press*, *Independence*, *Kansas*.

Not only Kansas City mourns the passing of Mr. Nelson, for who has not admired the marvelous man and his great work? — *The Democrat-Enterprise*, *Hanover*, *Kansas*.

His heart was always right. His sympathy was forever with the under dog. Fear was unknown to him. The word defeat was not found in his lexicon. — *The Chieftain*, *Bonner Springs*, *Kansas*.

He grew mentally and as an executive all his life, both keeping pace with the growth of Kansas City and the Kansas City radius. — *The Journal-World*, *Lawrence*, *Kansas*.

He fought earnestly and consistently for civic righteousness, and defeat or victory never swerved him from his course. His was the mind of a master, and his memory will live long for that which he accomplished. — *The Republican*, *Paola*, *Kansas*.

He did more, possibly, than any other man in building up the moral and commercial life of Kansas City and the great Middle West, and in his death a great character is removed from the public life of this part of the United States. — *The Journal*, *Edgerton*, *Kansas*.

He was a great and wonderful man. There was a daily beauty about his life that won every heart who came in contact with him. In temperament he was mild,

conciliatory and candid, and yet remarkable for an uncompromising firmness. — *The New Era, Spring Hill, Kansas.*

Every man who ever worked for Colonel Nelson was his loyal admirer. — *The Enterprise, Alma, Kansas.*

During his lifetime Kansas City grew from a village to a city, but Mr. Nelson never let it outgrow The Star. — *The Beacon, Wichita, Kansas.*

He was a great factor in the development of Kansas City, and our Kansas. — *The Bulletin, Florence, Kansas.*

He will be lamented by all who gloried in his dauntless courage for the elimination of fraud and graft in all public and governmental affairs. — *The Journal, Scandia, Kansas.*

He was a power in the building of Kansas City from a little place to one of the most enterprising cities in the world. — *The News, Baxter Springs, Kansas.*

He was a great man who advocated what was right. — *The Ledger, Cawker City, Kansas.*

He had indomitable courage. — *The Advance, Chetopa, Kansas.*

He fought special privilege and sided with the average man against the rich crook. — *The Jacksonian, Cimarron, Kansas.*

The entire country feels the loss of this man. — *The Courant*, *Coats*, *Kansas.*

The newspaper world has lost its foremost exponent of ideal journalism. — *The Kansan*, *Concordia*, *Kansas.*

There are few men in private life whose death would be felt as that of Colonel Nelson. — *The Reflector*, *Elk Falls*, *Kansas.*

Under the guiding genius of Mr. Nelson The Star has been a power for good. — *The Herald*, *Eureka*, *Kansas.*

He was an enemy to graft and special privilege. — *The Democratic Messenger*, *Eureka*, *Kansas.*

Above all he believed in the principle that the populace was the biggest thing in every community and that everything legally created by it should be its servant. His fights for decent service from the public utilities of Kansas City were so persistent and masterful that even the defeats that frequently followed were more honorable to The Star than they were creditable to the victors. — *The Republican*, *Eldorado*, *Kansas.*

He advocated improvements and he fought for improvements and made improvements. — *The Times*, *Leavenworth*, *Kansas.*

He was Kansas City's greatest asset, and no matter how much people differed with him when alive, they admit it now. — *The Labor Chronicle*, *Leavenworth*, *Kansas.*

He was a friend of the common people and a sincere advocate of democracy. —*The Globe, Atchison, Kansas.*

He has been one of the most forceful men in American life in the last quarter of a century. —*The Tribune, Chanute, Kansas.*

He was one of the biggest men of the country. —*The Traveler, Arkansas City, Kansas.*

The Star has been a great factor in the world's advancement, and no greater tribute could ever be paid to any man than to say that he has helped to point the way to higher and better things in business, in morals and in politics. —*The Journal, Wellington, Kansas.*

He was good to the poor, and what more could any soul ask to earn entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven? —*The Gazette, Hutchinson, Kansas.*

He supported clean morals, private and public. —*The Wholesaler, Hutchinson, Kansas.*

The greatest force for good in this section of the country during the last quarter of a century has been The Kansas City Star. —*The Gazette, Beloit, Kansas.*

For thirty-five years the sturdy figure of Mr. Nelson has been prominent in the forefront of every battle waged against the forces of evil. —*The University Daily Kansan, Lawrence, Kansas.*

He did more to put Kansas City on the map than any other person or agency in that city. — *The Review, Garnett, Kansas.*

Mr. Nelson was a man with a vision — the only kind of a man who gets far in this world. That vision included the artistic in city building, the direct and simple in government, the recognition of the larger humanities in social relations, and because he preached his creed, in season and out of season, line upon line and precept upon precept, he made men and women all over the West think seriously on the good things of this life. — *The Reflector, Abilene, Kansas.*

Colonel Nelson's policies were broad ones that builded for better citizenship. — *The Post, Leavenworth, Kansas.*

He was a strong character and always fought for the public interest and opposed special privilege. — *The Democrat, Hiawatha, Kansas.*

He always waged war for the betterment of the Middle West. — *The World, Hiawatha, Kansas.*

His newspapers stand as his monument and bear the strongest testimony procurable to the ability, progressiveness and power of the man. — *The Times, Clay Center, Kansas.*

It is a marvelous achievement that he left behind in his paper. — *The Gazette, Peabody, Kansas.*

One of Mr. Nelson's opinions was that the farmer's wife was overworked and needed things better. Helping her was one of the permanent assignments on The Weekly Star. — *The Herald, Sabetha, Kansas.*

A fair fighter for humanity is gone. — *The Advocate, Columbus, Kansas.*

Every true-hearted man and woman must feel sorrow at the loss of this editor who stood firm as a rock for all those principles which represent the highest type of citizenship. — *The Norton County News, Kansas.*

We recognized in Mr. Nelson a major-general as concerning the newspaper fraternity. — *The Pantagraph, Sedgwick, Kansas.*

Men and women will pause during the solemn funeral service and fervently thank God for this good man's life. — *The Free Press, Colony, Kansas.*

Mr. Nelson and The Star fought for what he thought was right, and fought vigorously and without ceasing. — *The Daily Journal, Coffeyville, Kansas.*

Mr. Nelson was a great man; he has exercised a tremendous influence in that part of the United States west of the Mississippi River, and indeed upon the whole Nation. — *The Journal, Salina, Kansas.*

He was distinctively a builder, and an aggressive fighter for civic betterment. — *The Times, Wamego, Kansas.*

To have created such a newspaper as The Star would have been the worthy lifework of any man. It was the lifework of the great journalist and citizen who has passed away. He has built up an agency for constructive work here in the Southwest that will live long after him and continue his own effectual labors. — *The Capital, Topeka, Kansas.*

Colonel Nelson was not only a great newspaper man, he was also a great citizen. And Kansas City has lost a soldier from her ranks whose place probably can never be filled. — *The State Journal, Topeka, Kansas.*

He always fought that which was base and low. — *The Republic, Kansas City, Kansas.*

Kansas City's present greatness is largely due to The Star, and W. R. Nelson was The Star. — *The Stock Yards Nugget, Kansas City, Kansas.*

He conducted the Star in the interests of the people. — *The Sun, Kansas City, Kansas.*

We must praise the lifework of this man, how each day he instilled in the minds of the young higher ideals of manhood and womanhood, sobriety, moral and righteous business and political principles. — *The Sun, Neodesha, Kansas.*

He was clean-cut, with a fixed principle, standing for what was best of humanity. — *The Journal, Smith Center, Kansas.*

He exerted a mighty influence for the highest ideals. — *The Record*, *Stockton*, *Kansas*.

A prominent Chicago editor once said to us, The Kansas City Star is esteemed by newspaper men generally as one of the best two or three newspapers in the country. — *The Recorder*, *Holton*, *Kansas*.

Mr. Nelson and his newspaper have been the biggest power in the Missouri Valley, and he has ever tried to use his enormous influence to benefit his town and his country. — *The Headlight-Commercial*, *Horton*, *Kansas*.

A great man was W. R. Nelson, great in his work, great in his achievements, great in his friends — and great in his enemies. He labored long and well. — *The Courant*, *Howard*, *Kansas*.

The Star always stood for clean politics, progress along lasting lines, and the highest kind of morals. — *The Kansan*, *Kirwin*, *Kansas*.

What a fine, clean type of manhood he has been! — *The Republican*, *Toronto*, *Kansas*.

The personality of this great editor was felt in every movement for the greatest good throughout the Middle West. — *The Graphic*, *Osawatomie*, *Kansas*.

His was a busy, useful life; a life that has touched, through his paper, millions of other lives, and he tried

to make that touch, that influence, a righteous force, a real help, an elevating stimulus. — *The Kansan, Pittsburg, Kansas.*

His worth was attested from the highest to the lowest. — *The Tribune, Marquette, Kansas.*

His courage was marvelous, his sympathy and charity sublime, his intellect strong and his Christianity practical and helpful. — *The Index, Medicine Lodge, Kansas.*

The great West and Southwest are sorry to hear of the passing of this man. — *The Western Advocate, Mankato, Kansas.*

His hopes and his ideals are written into scores of progressive laws to-day in the States where William R. Nelson wielded his tremendous influence for the common good. — *The Tiller and Toiler, Larned, Kansas.*

VII

MISSOURI

Mr. Nelson informed, stimulated, and crystallized public opinion in support of progress and improvement. Kansas City is adorned with monuments of his public service. — *The Post-Dispatch*, *St. Louis*.

It is hard to say which went deepest with Colonel Nelson — devotion to Kansas City or devotion to The Star. He lived in his city and his paper. Both are in a peculiar sense his monuments. The newspaper profession has lost a creative personality — one of the greatest editors of the age. The foremost citizen of no mean city has finished his service. A Missourian of unique brain, mind, and will has gone to his rest. — *The Republic*, *St. Louis*.

The death of William Rockhill Nelson removes one of the most rugged newspaper men of America. Without question he was Kansas City's most distinguished citizen. — *The Globe-Democrat*, *St. Louis*.

Mr. Nelson did more to build up his town than all the other influences for good combined. He was the power behind. His thought initiated the movement for a better city. — *The Times*, *St. Louis*.

He has been a power in Kansas City, the largest single factor in its growth. He made the city do things, and he made people stop doing things that were harmful. — *The Star, St. Louis.*

Mr. Nelson's life was a triumph of clean journalism. Kansas City, Missouri, Kansas, the Southwest, and the Nation are the poorer by his loss, but he left all better than he found them, and the forces he started will go on toward making better homes and better communities everywhere. — *The University Missourian, Columbia, Missouri.*

If therefore you should ask what is William Rockhill Nelson's monument, we would answer, "Kansas City." Not, indeed, the Kansas City of packing-houses, machinery depots, rich department stores; these come with geographical location and population. The Kansas City Mr. Nelson lived for was the ideal, the spiritual Kansas City, the Kansas City of the Cliff Drive, the parks, boulevards, art gallery; the Kansas City of beautiful streets; the Kansas City of a happy, thrifty, well-governed, well-educated, self-respecting people.

To this end he created a paper to read, which was itself almost a liberal education. Morning and evening, every day, he sent through the homes of the city a morning paper and an evening paper which never appeared that it did not bring columns, if not pages, of real literature, real education, not dry-as-dust stuff in mummy cloths that stank of death, but vitalized, modernized, luminous, twice a day a lesson in liberal culture

at all points of life. — *The Central Christian Advocate, Kansas City, Missouri.*

They are praising William R. Nelson as a great, modern tribune of the people. But we, in Kansas City, see something which the sociologists cannot see, which no political mind at a distance can see. They do not understand the story of the Vision.

For my part, I think the best picture of him is the master sculptor reshaping the vision of Kansas City.

He arrived just in time. The town was unpaved, untamed, and unashamed. Only William R. Nelson saw that the topography had natural elements of beauty. He was the only citizen of the young metropolis whose version of the Vision was beautiful. His task was like a sculptor trying to shape a rebellious, jeering stone. . . . The Star painted the glory of trees to a public which had burned trees as firewood. It preached about breathing-places in a town that was one-half vacant lots. . . .

It is doubtful if there was another man in the world who would have gone through with it. Like a cyclopean sculptor, Nelson grappled with the object and strove to outline the figure. Gradually the town saw the new Vision. And it triumphed. . . . And there was a profound lesson in it. It contained the life-germ of human uplift. For if you can make the crowd behold a vision, lo! you have an army with banners. — P. T. in *The Independent, Kansas City, Missouri.*

Surely, if reward comes for deeds accomplished in the flesh, — accomplished or earnestly striven after, —

Mr. Nelson's recompense will be no small one. A commonwealth bettered for his being here, acknowledges the debt. — *The Enterprise, Sheldon, Missouri.*

Not in the history of this country has there been as much space in editorial tributes on the death of a private citizen as there is being published in eulogy on the life and character of the late William R. Nelson, editor and owner of the Kansas City Star. And that is not because he has made ten or fifteen million dollars in the newspaper business, either, but wholly because Nelson, the man, deserved the tributes. — *The Daily Argus, Brookfield, Missouri.*

William Rockhill Nelson, founder, owner, and editor of The Kansas City Star, is dead. The editors of The Word and Way have not known Mr. Nelson personally in any intimate way. Mostly we have known him by his works, and have judged the tree by its fruit. We have no desire and no purpose to speak of him here in terms of extravagant or fulsome praise, but Mr. Nelson was, beyond all disputation, an extraordinary man. Mr. Nelson, whatever his enemies may say of him, — and his enemies have been many, — was a man of high civic and moral ideals. And these ideals he followed unflaggingly, and often exasperatingly, to men of lower ideals and no ideals. The Star has been a moulder of public opinion. It would be impossible to calculate the value that The Star has been in Kansas City and the country at large in its work of inspiring and developing public sentiment of the wholesome kind. The Star has persistently, consistently, and effectively fought the battles in

the city that it has had such a large part in making, for cleanliness, justice, and righteousness. In the growth of Kansas City The Star has led every worthy enterprise. The city's system of parks and boulevards and driveways has been influentially promoted by The Star. The influence of The Star on the industrial, moral, and religious life of the city has been of the most salutary sort. And The Star has not failed to lift its voice against the saloon and its corrupting influences, and against corrupt partisan politics in the city government. The stand which The Star has taken against the bad element and the bad policies and conditions in the city has made for it and its editor many bitter enemies. But it should be known, and will be known in the course of time, that Mr. Nelson's enemies, for the most part, have been made by his warfare through The Star against the wrong and the bad. The Star has eschewed everything that savored of yellow journalism. Its policies have been dignified and constructive. The Kansas City Star holds an enviable place in the field of American journalism. It stands to-day in the front rank and is, perhaps, in the real elements of greatness, the greatest American daily. Its pages are always clean, its contentions just, and its moral tone wholesome and heartening.

The thoughtful and virtuous honor the name of William R. Nelson, and these will fondly cherish his memory. — *The Word and Way and Central Baptist, Kansas City, Missouri.*

For twenty-nine years the editor of this journal has closely observed the policies and progress of The Kansas

City Star, admired its sturdy independence, and wondered at that which has been indeed wonderful, its never-ending fight against whatever odds for civic cleanliness and public advancement. — *The Implement Trade Journal, Kansas City, Missouri.*

He was a great leader, not a follower, and one of the most potential forces in American journalism. Kansas City and the West have lost one of the greatest factors in the uplifting and development movement. — *The Illustrated World, Kansas City, Missouri.*

He was one of those dominant spirits to whose energy was due the metamorphosis of this city from a frontier town to one of metropolitan significance. — *The Drovers Telegram, Kansas City, Missouri.*

It was his desire and ambition to work and even fight for the betterment and uplift, not only of the community in which he lived, but also of the State and Nation.

He was for public improvements and for the promotion of all the commercial and educational lines of this city, and he and his institution helped greatly to uplift and promote Kansas City.

He was a man of character highly esteemed by society.

He was a man of marked and wonderful ability and knowledge, a great citizen whom the country to-day misses definitely. — *The Averof (Greek newspaper), Kansas City, Missouri.*

Kansas City owes to William R. Nelson its greatness, its beauty and its growth. — *L'Observatore (Italian newspaper), Kansas City, Missouri.*

William R. Nelson was loved by the Jewish people of America, and he deserved their love because he gladly gave his personal support to all Jewish projects, to which he added the mighty voice of his presses. — *The News Letter*, published by the Young Men's Hebrew Association, Kansas City, Missouri.

His every act in daily life was for good and the uplifting of humanity. — *The Herald*, *Mountain Grove*, *Missouri*.

His biggest fights were waged against monopolies and crooked elections. — *The Journal*, *Mountain Grove*, *Missouri*.

I would give Mr. Nelson and the paper he founded first place among all. — *The Monitor*, *Republic*, *Missouri*.

We loved William R. Nelson for the enemies he made. — *The Western Enterprise*, *Rich Hill*, *Missouri*.

He was a builder of cities of the Middle West, and best of all, of honesty and uprightness in men and government. — *The Bee*, *Rothville*, *Missouri*.

It is well for the world to take note of what he did, to reverence his deed and to cherish his memory as part of the common heritage which great souls have left to the children of men for emulation and inspiration. — *The Record*, *Sarcoxie*, *Missouri*.

His greatest monument is the splendid greatness of Kansas City, and that he labored always for the public good. — *The Democrat, Sedalia, Missouri.*

He conducted on a high plane one of America's greatest newspapers. — *The Democrat, Shelbina, Missouri.*

His paper was, morally, the cleanest metropolitan paper in the United States. — *The Herald, Laddonia, Missouri.*

The loss of Mr. Nelson must be felt by all Missourians who are fighting for better houses, better schools, improved working conditions and service in government. — *The Indicator, La Grange, Missouri.*

Mr. Nelson was the most considerable citizen in the State of Missouri. He was a good, great man. — *The Democrat, Lamar, Missouri.*

Much of Kansas City's progress is due to his efforts. — *The Pike County News, Louisiana, Missouri.*

The Nation suffers the loss of one of the most influential and useful citizens. — *The Times, Tipton, Missouri.*

The West is proud of him. — *The Republican, Trenton, Missouri.*

He did much to shape and mould and give character to Kansas City. — *The Leader, Versailles, Missouri.*

He died as he lived, true and intrepid. To this spirit the progress of Kansas City for the last thirty years stands as a living monument. — *The Chronicle*, *Weston*, *Missouri*.

He fought graft and greed in every form. — *The People's Searchlight*, *West Plains*, *Missouri*.

Mr. Nelson was unswervingly loyal to his people. — *The Herald*, *Marceline*, *Missouri*.

Mr. Nelson's creed was independence and public service. — *The Signal*, *Mercer*, *Missouri*.

The Milan Standard grieves with the entire newspaper fraternity of Missouri in the death of William Rockhill Nelson. — *The Standard*, *Milan*, *Missouri*.

There 's inspiration in the career of William R. Nelson to all men — and most especially to newspaper men. — *The News-Jeffersonian*, *Mound City*, *Missouri*.

Colonel Nelson was a remarkable character, a combination of brains, courage, and executive ability. — *The Democrat*, *Bethany*, *Missouri*.

We have lost one of our greatest and best men. — *The Record*, *Blairstown*, *Missouri*.

He was the great apostle of the rights of the people. — *The Constitution*, *Chillicothe*, *Missouri*.

His was one of the most remarkable newspaper careers ever known. — *The Times*, *Columbia*, *Missouri*.

He has been back of Kansas City and has made the city what it is. — *The Star*, *Drexel*, *Missouri*.

He made The Star one of the greatest newspapers. — *The Journal*, *Edgerton*, *Missouri*.

The Star was always on the right side of all moral questions. — *The Democrat*, *Gallatin*, *Missouri*.

He did all he could for the betterment of Kansas City. — *The Enterprise*, *Gower*, *Missouri*.

The Star stood for what was best for the people. — *The Local-News*, *Green Ridge*, *Missouri*.

Mr. Nelson and his paper have had much to do in making Kansas City what it is to-day. — *The Gem*, *Jameson*, *Missouri*.

He was a man among men; he always espoused the right against the wrong. — *The Chariton Record*, *Keytesville*, *Missouri*.

Mr. Nelson was a great factor in the upbuilding of Kansas City and the State. — *The Hustler-Leader*, *Hale*, *Missouri*.

The Star was recognized as being ever ready to take up arms against vice and immorality. — *The News*, *St. James*, *Missouri*.

He was a real newspaper genius. — *The Press, Carthage, Missouri.*

He had something to say and he said it fearlessly. — *The Republican Headlight, Union, Missouri.*

He fought for the under man and launched many civic movements that have borne good fruit, and these movements will continue to enlarge. He fought for clean elections and was a great leader in movements for the betterment of men. — *The Times, Altamont, Missouri.*

He wielded an untiring fight against vice, crooked politics, and graft. — *The Live Wire, Altamont, Missouri.*

He went ahead doing what he thought was right and won out. — *The News, Cameron, Missouri.*

No newspaper man who has a knowledge of the ethics and standards of the profession can but spare a wreath for the bier of William Rockhill Nelson. — *The Bulletin, Linneus, Missouri.*

His paper ranked high among the truly great newspapers of America. — *The News, Linneus, Missouri.*

You can find thousands of people over the Mississippi Valley who steadfastly maintain that he has made Kansas City the great center it is. — *The Views, Garden City, Missouri.*

He was a reformer of the whip-cord type and fought valiantly to keep the city and the temple clean. — *The Howard Courant*, *Fayette*, *Missouri*.

He has set the pace for newspaper men of the world. — *The News-Review*, *Anderson*, *Missouri*.

We have always admired his courage, dominance, persistence, and enthusiasm. — *The Bee*, *Braymer*, *Missouri*.

He did more for the advancement of Kansas City and surrounding territory than any other one man. — *The Tribune*, *Liberty*, *Missouri*.

The Kansas City Star took the first decided stand against Mr. Booze of all the great dailies in America. — *The William Jewell Student*, *Liberty*, *Missouri*.

His conscience was the sole criterion of his deeds and words. — *The Missourian*, *Glasgow*, *Missouri*.

We have read The Star continuously for fifteen years, and remember no word, line, or paragraph that could have been construed to bear a shady meaning, nor have we seen an advertisement offering a commodity for sale that would be harmful to manhood or womanhood. — *The Journal*, *Tina*, *Missouri*.

He was always on the side of honesty and the greatest amount of good for the largest number of people — the people who labor. — *The Globe*, *Gilliam*, *Missouri*.

He has done more for the betterment of mankind than any one man that we know of. — *The Appeal, Paris, Missouri.*

Butcher, baker, banker, or candlestick-maker, all looked alike to The Star. It was an instrument of public service first, a personal belonging next. The Star, despite its owner's millions, is the most radical and the most powerful champion of social and economic justice in the Nation to-day. It is the friend of the disinherited, the defender of the under dog. Again we say that none but a big man could have so done — and he won, too. — *The Mercury, Paris, Missouri.*

Ignoring the petty attacks of cheap politicians, W. R. Nelson ploughed straight ahead in the course marked out. He was a great newspaper man. — *The News, Harrisonville, Missouri.*

His fight against the graft that was licking up the metropolis will be far-reaching in the future. — *The Home-Press, La Plata, Missouri.*

His influence for good extended far and wide. — *The Journal, Kirksville, Missouri.*

He devoted every energy of his great mind to the development of an ideal citizenship. — *The Graphic, Kirksville, Missouri.*

Journalism of the great Middle West has received an uplift, an inspiration to the new journalism as founded

by this fallen brother. The Star stands for service to a community and state rather than sordid, selfish ends. — *The Border Telephone*, *Hume*, *Missouri*.

The Star and Mr. Nelson have always stood for that which is good and steadfastly fought against that which is evil. — *The Herald*, *Palmyra*, *Missouri*.

The Star owes its magnificent prestige to the fact that it published the truth. — *The Progress*, *Holden*, *Missouri*.

Few men in the world ever stood up and fought so unflinchingly for their ideals and principles as did this master of men. — *The Call*, *Excelsior Springs*, *Missouri*.

He has been a tremendous power in the upbuilding of Kansas City materially and morally, winning the love of all who loved the right and the hatred of all who preferred darkness to light. — *The Democrat*, *Warrensburg*, *Missouri*.

His was a success which lays up store for eternity. — *The Star-Journal*, *Warrensburg*, *Missouri*.

The Nation has lost one of its greatest editors and public-spirited men. — *The Herald*, *Stansberry*, *Missouri*.

William Rockhill Nelson was one of the makers of the Middle West. — *The Jeffersonian*, *Higginsville*, *Missouri*.

His life was one of wonderful service to the Middle West. — *The Journal*, *Higginsville*, *Missouri*.

Kansas City and the Central States will never forget this great man. — *The Eagle, Sweet Springs, Missouri.*

A great city lost its best and ablest citizen when W. R. Nelson died. The whole country lost, too, in like proportion. — *The Herald, Belton, Missouri.*

To many a struggling newspaper owner and editor, Colonel Nelson has been a shining example of the work a newspaper can do, of the leadership a newspaper can hold, and a proof that success, in influence, accomplishment, and in enjoying the best things of life, can be attained even with the hostility of the interests which seek to make the press subservient to them. — *The Express, Kirksville, Missouri.*

He was a great man because he had the interests of the masses at heart and loved humanity. — *The Rustler, Slater, Missouri.*

He was one of the greatest builders for good the world has ever known. — *The Leader, Norborne, Missouri.*

He stood up for more things that were right than any other big paper in the country. — *The Democrat, Odessa, Missouri.*

It was rugged honor that placed Mr. Nelson among the greatest of his time. — *The Argus, Platte City, Missouri.*

No scheme for the betterment of the community ever appealed to Colonel William Rockhill Nelson in vain. — *The Democrat, Plattsburg, Missouri.*

Through his great newspapers Mr. Nelson was always striving to do good. — *The Times, Pleasant Hill, Missouri.*

His big, kind heart was known to his many thousands of readers. — *The Index, Puxico, Missouri.*

His every breath, his very being, was dedicated to the task of uplifting and the betterment of the human family. — *The Register, Webb City, Missouri.*

Much that Kansas City is can be traced directly to the influence of this great newspaper man. — *The Ledger, Mexico, Missouri.*

He has always stood for the right, has fought the battles of the weak and the oppressed and has pointed the way to higher ideals in public and in private life. His influence upon the life of the Middle West has been felt for the last two decades. — *The News-Herald, Joplin, Missouri.*

His newspaper has been conspicuous as a fearless opponent of rings in both civic and political life, hated by the trickster and loved by the honest, common people. — *The Budget, Brookfield, Missouri.*

By the death of William R. Nelson, the newspaper fraternity lost one of its most enterprising, progressive and aggressive members. — *The Gazette, Brookfield, Missouri.*

Mr. Nelson was the best newspaper man in the United States. — *The Democrat, Carrollton, Missouri.*

Under his guidance The Star has attained a world-wide reputation. — *The Democrat, Butler, Missouri.*

He exerted a tremendous influence over this section of the country. — *The Democrat-Forum, Maryville, Missouri.*

The editor of The Star has done more to build up Kansas City and the Middle West than any other agency. The man that built this wonderful newspaper is dead and we all mourn. — *The Democrat-News, Marshall, Missouri.*

He was a potent factor in shaping the opinion of the people. — *The Saline Citizen, Marshall, Missouri.*

His papers were always for clean government, the up-building of all things whether of a business or social nature. — *The News, Mount Washington, Missouri.*

Kansas City would have been an important town without Colonel Nelson and The Star. That it would have been a great city without them is open to reasonable doubt. — *The Post, Nevada, Missouri.*

The Greater Kansas City of to-day is in no slight degree the monument of William R. Nelson. He was indeed a mighty man. — *The Republican, Springfield, Missouri.*

The Nation has lost one of its ablest and most useful workers. — *The Express, Springfield, Missouri.*

Strong men like William R. Nelson are few, and when such men become champions for the best there is in life they leave a lasting impress and are entitled to veneration as ideal examplars of true and knightly personality. — *The News-Press, St. Joseph, Missouri.*

Nelson was the dominating influence for good in his community. — *The Gazette, St. Joseph, Missouri.*

Through the columns of his papers Mr. Nelson taught optimism, civic pride, right living, the square deal. — *The Chronicle, Macon, Missouri.*

The press of the entire State, of the West, and of the Nation, laments the passing of Colonel Nelson. — *The Times-Democrat, Macon, Missouri.*

He always sought to bring the great States of the West up to their highest point of development. — *The Republican, Macon, Missouri.*

The present Kansas City owes much to him. That which he controlled made him rich, but in doing so it gave Kansas City a lot of that spirit which causes all Missourians, in fact the West, to be proud of her. — *The Republican, Clinton, Missouri.*

This paper, not agreeing with him in much, has admired his forceful, resolute character, his combativeness

for any cause he deemed right. He was a distinct asset in Western greatness. — *The Democrat, Clinton, Missouri.*

Mr. Nelson did probably more for Kansas City than any other individual. — *The Conservator, Richmond, Missouri.*

It can be truly said that he was a great editor and a great man, and his like will probably not be seen in this Western country for a generation. — *The News, Richmond, Missouri.*

He was the best friend Kansas City ever had. — *The Missourian, Richmond, Missouri.*

The Star has been the largest single factor in the growth of Kansas City. — *The News, Forest City, Missouri.*

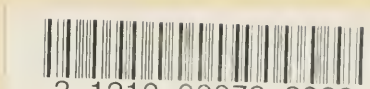
Dead, he yet speaketh. — *The Pilot, Maysville, Missouri.*

He was one of America's greatest men. — *The 4-County Windsorite, Windsor, Missouri.*

He was a forceful factor in the development of Missouri. — *The Advertiser, Fayette, Missouri.*

Kansas City will always bear the impress of the thirty-four years in the life of William R. Nelson as a citizen. His work was one of service, his success was because the people came to know that the man and his paper

were trying to reach the best things, his proof of success the enmity and hate of so many men upon whose selfish purposes he trampled and whose iniquitous plans he exposed. — *The Jackson County Examiner, Independence, Missouri.*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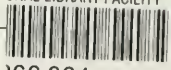
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